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SIXTY YEARS OF VIEWS ON THE WORLD

the UNESCO Courier

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2008 - N° 10

SIXTY YEARS OF VIEWS ON THE WORLD

The UNESCO Courier **is celebrating its 60th anniversary. An opportunity to explore the present while looking back at the past. A way, also, to highlight some developments in how we view and think about the world - each paper refers to an article from a back issue of the magazine.**

You can read interviews with Wangari Maathai (Kenya), Martti Ahtisaari (Finland), Luc Montagnier (France), just to mention the three Nobel laureates who have contributed to this special issue, alongside other distinguished personalities.

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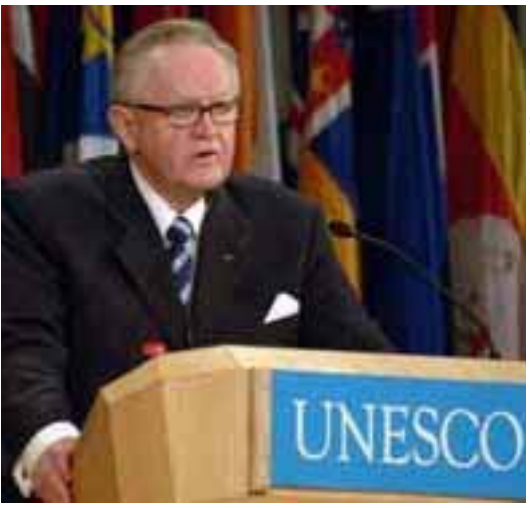
FROZEN CONFLICTS

Roni Amelan (UNESCO) interviewed Former president Martti Ahtissari.



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Martti Ahtisaari at UNESCO, 2 October 2008.

Which of your negotiating experiences as a peace negotiator have been most satisfying and which have been most challenging and frustrating?

I am not easily frustrated, otherwise I wouldn't be in this exercise at all and I have been lucky to achieve solutions. Namibia in a sense took far too long: I became UN Special Representative in 1977 and it lasted until 1989 when we were able to get our operations started. There were moments when I considered leaving, but I was very glad that I stuck with it because it was satisfying in the end.

Maybe Namibia is one exception, maybe because Finland has a special bond with Namibia due to Finnish missionaries who worked there for a hundred years. That was very useful as the churches of Namibia played an important role in the peace process. Also, on a personal level, as secretary general of the Finnish Student Association, I received the first Namibian students who came to Finland in the early 1960s so I had long term personal engagement that started long before I became U.N. Commissioner for Namibia.

Looking at the bigger picture, do you see world peace as progressing or regressing?

The number of conflicts is diminishing but we have too many frozen conflicts, the most important of which is the Middle East. It really needs to be solved and everybody knows on which basis it has to be solved. This conflict spoils the international atmosphere and as long as it is not solved we will not be able to solve the conflicts in Afghanistan, Irak and Iran.

Has the United Nations been successful in serving the interests of peace?

Yes it has. We have had much time to improve preparations for the mediation and negotiation of conflicts and many of the peace keeping operations also facilitate our work. The U.N. is improving its capacity through the establishment of new units and different funding mechanisms for conflict resolution.

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Namibian children. Namibia was one of Martti Ahtisaari's toughest and most satisfying assignments.

Nevertheless, in every speech I make, I denounce the attitude that people take as if it were normal that conflicts become frozen. I think that we have to demand that the countries that have major influence in any given conflict and whose cooperation is vital are prepared to use this influence and lean on the countries concerned to solve these [frozen] conflicts. I cannot accept that nothing is done to convince these countries to use their influence.

We have to show we are serious about human rights. Human rights are undermined one way or another in every single conflict, and the U.N. must be seen to take human rights seriously.

In general, I would say that above human rights, we have to advance rule of law in the world in general. in the absence of rule of law there can be no respect for human rights.

What about UNESCO's mandate to create solidarity among peoples in in its fields of competence? Has it made a difference in terms of building peace in the minds of men, to use the phrase of UNESCO's constitution?

I got involved with UNESCO when I worked with liberation movements especially SWAPO (South-West African People's Organisation, Namibia) and the education resources that UNESCO provided were extremely useful.

I don't think that the work of organizations like UNESCO can ever be finished. I hope that this work is maintained.

I also hope that organisations like UNESCO can help countries emerging from conflicts to look at the past. The only country that has done so in Europe is Germany. Nobody else has and we can see that some of the problems that are plaguing us in Europe are directly due to the fact that we haven't examined our past properly.

THE CHALLENGE OF PEACE

by Vadim Ardatovsky

THE COURIER, 1967

EARLY in June 1967, as participants in an international meeting of journalists held in Strasbourg, we tried to forget the outside world and spent an agreeable week discussing the recent progress of technology and its growing impact on the press.

In our small way, we tried to make a contribution to that increasingly popular exercise which has been termed "Futurology" and which sometimes skims fairly close to Science Fiction. We tried to visualize the world of tomorrow and more especially what a "Golden Age" of journalism might be like tomorrow. We saw artificial satellites whirling through space, transmitting facsimile newspapers to every corner of the globe. Any family could select any of the world's newspapers at the touch of a button, and some of them were even "talking newspapers" which added a more personal touch. Stories by news reporters on the spot were sent directly to automatically operated composing machines, while front page dispatches were flashed instantaneously via laser beams.

Our tiny international group, made up of journalists from France, U.K., U.S.S.R., U.S.A., the Arab countries, Japan, Yugoslavia, Ireland, Czechoslovakia and other countries, even went so far as to work out how long it would take for such innovations to be introduced, whether in the next twenty, fifty or a hundred years.

By tacit agreement we omitted any mention of politics despite the fact that a war had broken out in the Middle East that very week and no one could then predict whether it would be possible to circumscribe the conflict that had erupted or whether it would eventually spread to other countries. Our discussions on the future progress of the communications industry were

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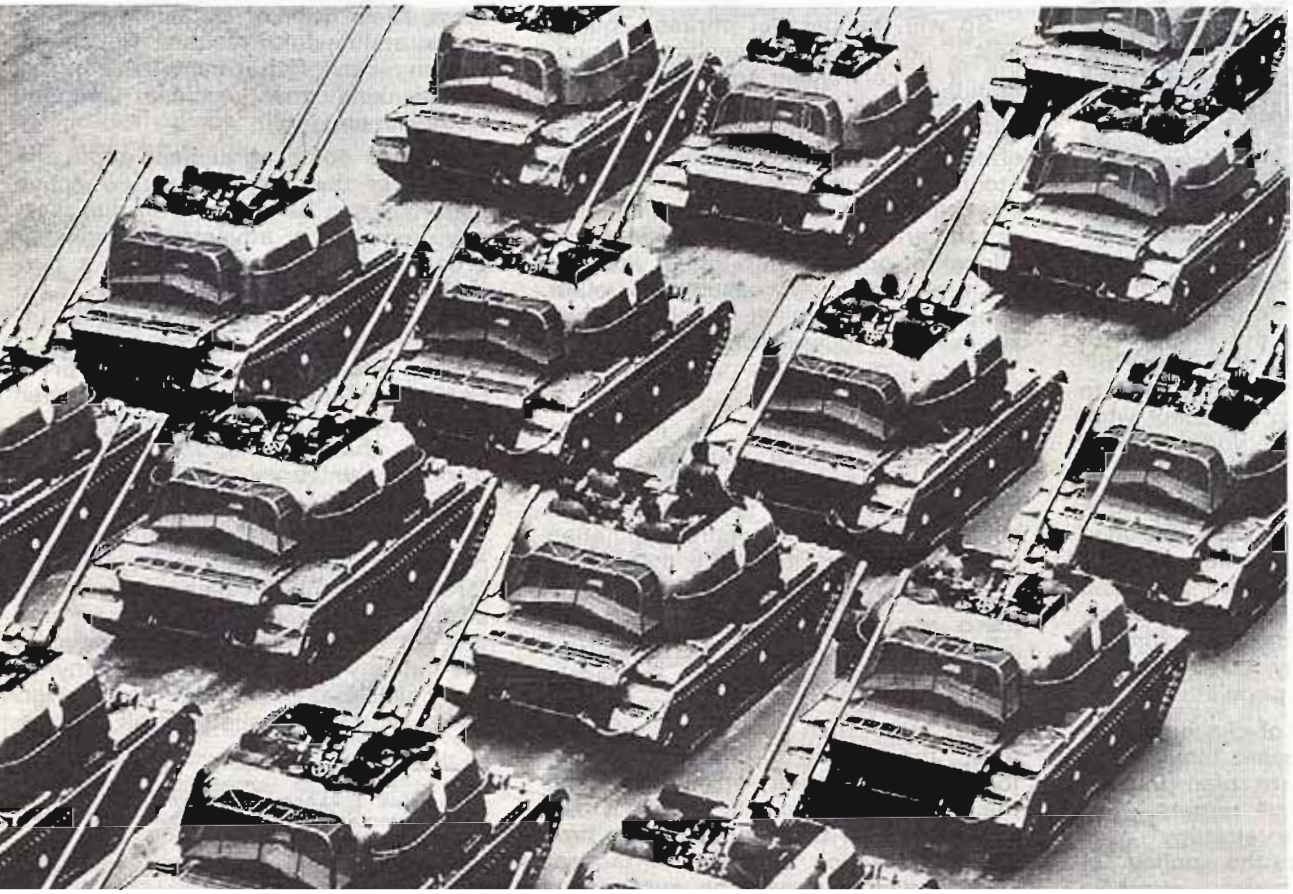
VADIM ARDATOVSKY, *a Soviet journalist, is a well-known commentator on international relations in the U.S.S.R. He has taken part in several international conferences of journalists devoted to studies and discussions of world affairs and on world problems of mass communications.*



Weapons of war (left). Tools for peace (right). But a tank costs far more than a tractor and nations squander astronomical sums to maintain their arsenals of modern weapons. The cost of a new prototype bomber with full equipment, for example, equals the price of 50,000 tractors, or 75 fully equipped 100-bed hospitals or 30 science faculties each with 1,000 students (see "Unesco Courier", November 1964).

Photo © Holmes - Lebel

Photo © APN - Ivanov

based on what seemed a natural assumption that the world would develop peacefully in the foreseeable future.

Clearly no one—except a comparatively small group of professional military men—can think of drawing up vast plans for the future with the perspective of a world war in front of him. The architect breaking ground for a new skyscraper, the gardener landscaping a new park, the artist starting on a new painting, all think ahead to the future enjoyment and benefit of their work to society for years and even generations to come. To put it another way, the need for peace is as natural to man as his need for oxygen, and the most important instinct of man—the instinct to stay alive.

A Swiss scientist, Jean-Jacques Babel, has recently calculated that in the course of history man has waged 14,500 major and minor wars, and the French sociologist, Gaston Bouthoul, is the author of a study entitled 8,000 *Traités de Paix* (8,000 peace treaties). Someone has worked out that man's "Golden Age"—when peace has reigned throughout the world—has been of surprisingly short duration, hardly more than a total of 220 years!

I wonder whether we shouldn't stop and reflect on this a moment, and ask ourselves how much those 14,500 wars have impeded the advance of civilization.

People may differ widely in their opinions about Karl Marx's philosophy but no one, I believe, could argue with the following statement he made about war : "From a purely economic point of view, it is tantamount to a nation throwing a portion of its capital into the sea."

In the course of the Second World War, 60 per cent of the national revenue of the belligerent countries was drained away and lost forever. In addition, this terrible holocaust claimed the lives of 50 million persons who died in a sea, not of water, but of blood.

The rocky road to international agreements

It would hardly seem necessary today to describe once again the horrible consequences of a new world war, a war fought with nuclear weapons. The destruction involved would go far beyond what any of us could possibly imagine. The world's press has on various occasions quoted a figure which is in no sense an exaggeration : the death of 700 to 800 million people as a result of the first nuclear attack.

CLEARLY, therefore, neither common sense nor the spirit of humanity give mankind any other choice today than the establishment of a lasting peace. Yet it is a secret to no one that we live in a world of unstable, uneasy peace. Time and again we have seen the flames of war erupt in Korea, Algeria, Suez, Vietnam and the Middle East . . . As dangerous for peace today is the present tendency of the majority of nations to stockpile armaments. Professor George Schwartzenberger, of London University, was certainly right when he said that present-day relations between nations are permeated with mutual distrust and constant fear of other nations' intentions.

It would therefore appear quite logical that nations seek to perfect the means for their own defence. But there does not seem to be any formula for doing away with the "world in arms" and the suspicions which derive from it, other than the elimination of the material basis of this fear and distrust, that is, the armaments themselves.

It is only since the end of the 19th Century and in the brief interludes between wars in our own time that world political thought has been led to consider seriously the theory of general disarmament. In the past, disarmament was applied to a country after it met defeat ; it had to surrender its arms, its fortifications were destroyed and other measures of a similar nature were taken. Bitter experience has taught us that far from preventing new wars and conquests this increased the danger of war.

That is why, during the Second World War with its untold destruction and millions of victims, people everywhere were made acutely aware of the urgency of establishing a lasting peace based on the one means of definitely guaranteeing it, namely, disarmament. Even before the end of the war, while the fighting was still going on and the outcome was not yet decided, the Allies began to think about the peace which would follow the war. Before the war ended, Moscow, London, Washington and Paris were already seeking ways to build the peace of the future.

In October 1943 a meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Four Allied Powers was held in Moscow. In the declaration they jointly signed it was emphasized that the problem of disarmament should be resolved in the same spirit of unity which had been displayed by the Great Powers of the Anti-Nazi coalition.

The approach to the problem of disarmament at that time was perhaps somewhat naive : the soldiers would return home after victory and would abandon their rifles and uniforms forever ; at the same time production of guns, tanks and bombers would be stopped.

The appearance of a new type of weapon and its production by one of the Powers changed the situation. Disarmament became even more vital than before, but the solution to the problem became even more difficult.

At the first session of the United Nations General Assembly in 1946, the U.S.S.R. proposed a "draft international convention to prohibit the production and employment of weapons based on the use of atomic energy for the purpose of mass destruction." This plan called for the destruction within three months of all atomic weapons and, what is often forgotten nowadays, the setting up of an international control body with very wide powers. This body would have had access to atomic installations in all countries and made sure that no state infringed the convention.

HAD this project been adopted, the atomic bombs in the possession of the United States would have been destroyed, and neither the U.S.S.R. nor Great Britain, nor France nor any other nation would have been able to produce their own Atomic and Hydrogen weapons. The problem of disarmament would have resumed its "pre-nuclear" aspect and might have been easier to resolve.

At the time, however, it was argued that the Soviet Union was seeking to destroy weapons it did not possess and thus obtain a military and strategic advantage. In view of the ideas could well be justified. But had it been possible in 1946 to foresee the situation twenty years later, this argument might well have lost its full force and appeared politically short-sighted.

Scientific and technical progress is governed by its own laws which are often independent of politics. Even in the days when Leonardo da Vinci was designing his flying machines, men vaguely foresaw the possibility of rockets and supersonic planes. Had the great atomic physicists and mathematicians whose names are now familiar to everyone (with a timelag of 10 to 20 years) never been born, there can be no doubt that other scientists would soon have discovered atomic energy along with its immense potentialities for destruction as well as for peace. The spread of nuclear energy and weapons to other countries was thus, obviously, only a question of time.

THE question of the control of nuclear weapons has certainly been the big stumbling block of all discussions on disarmament. There was once a time when heated debates occurred over the question "which came first the chicken or the egg?" In our present age we have seen endless discussions on whether control should precede disarmament or disarmament precede control. It must be obvious, however, that the only rational formula must be : "No disarmament without control, and no control without disarmament." In theory everyone is in agreement on this, both in the United States and the Soviet Union ; but in practice.....

In practice the means of war and destruction continue to be stockpiled and perfected. For this reason it is more important than ever to do everything possible to facilitate a *detente* in international relations, and to prepare the ground for eventual total disarmament by an effort to limit the present arms race.

The first successful attempts in this direction was made in 1963 when the Powers signatory to the Moscow Treaty agreed to ban nuclear weapon tests in the atmosphere, in outer space and under water. Agreement came following a whole series of discussions, all of which centered on the major issue of control.

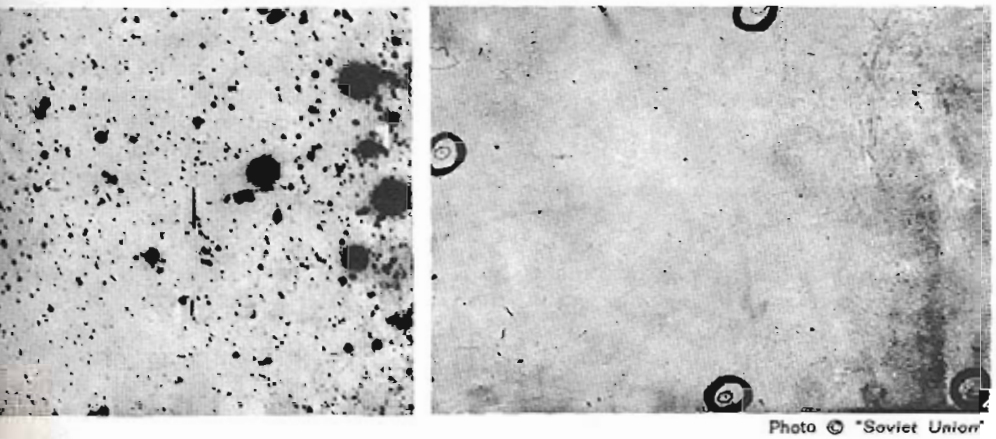


Photo © "Soviet Union"

The Nuclear Test Ban Treaty signed in Moscow on August 5, 1963 prohibited nuclear weapon tests in the atmosphere, in outer space and under water. France and Mainland China, who were not signatories, have since carried out nuclear tests in the atmosphere. Top, scientist examines a radiogram which reveals extent of radioactive pollution in the atmosphere. Tests have shown that contamination by fall-out particles decreased considerably after the signing of the Moscow Treaty. Above left, dots and spots on a radiogram made in the autumn of 1962 indicate density of radioactive particles in the air. Above right, a 1965 radiogram has only four spots (circled).

the agreement was concluded, the sceptics and Doubting Thomases have been proved wrong. National detection devices have shown their complete effectiveness in assuring reciprocal control.

On December 19, 1966 the General Assembly of the United Nations unanimously adopted a historic treaty on principles governing the activities of States in the exploration and use of outer space including the Moon and other celestial bodies. The treaty specifically bans the orbiting in space of "any objects carrying nuclear weapons or any other kinds of weapons of mass destruction." This "demilitarization of outer space" treaty was simultaneously signed in London, Moscow and Washington on January 27, 1967. I was privileged to be present at the signing of this important document in Moscow which took place in the same building where the Moscow Nuclear Test Ban Treaty was signed in 1963.

We should not forget however that as early as 1959 the Antarctic Treaty (signed by 12 countries operating in the southern continent) guaranteed that Antarctica "shall continue forever to be used exclusively for peaceful purposes and shall not become the scene or object of international discord." The treaty prohibits the establishment of military bases, military manœuvres and the testing of any type of weapons, and bans nuclear explosions or the disposal of atomic waste in the Antarctic. The demilitarization of Antarctica has assured the constant friendly co-operation of scientific bases and expeditions at work there.

I feel that these steps, limited though they may appear to some, give us cause for optimism and are an incentive for further steps in the same direction. Thus, the time may well be ripe now to convene a world conference in which every nation possessing nuclear weapons would pledge itself not to be the first to make use of such weapons. Then too, apart from Antarctica there are many parts of the world where denuclearized zones could be established. Plans have already been put forward for the denuclearization of Scandinavia, the Balkans, Africa, Central Europe as well as other areas.

There are also various proposals (including one from the U.S.S.R.) for the reduction of all military budgets by 10 to 15 per cent, or by any other agreed amount, although events in South-East Asia and the Middle East have made it extremely difficult to carry such projects out.

The prohibition of underground nuclear explosions, however, now appears closer to a solution. Two years ago, at the 18-nation Geneva disarmament talks, several non-committed countries put forward a compromise plan calling for a ban on high-powered underground explosions and a moratorium on all other underground explosions, pending the conclusion of a general agreement on the question. This proposal does not correspond fully to the Soviet position but it has been accepted by the U.S.S.R. as a palliative to give the discussion a new start.

It was with great interest that I read an article by Walter Lippmann published in the "Unesco Courrier" of October 1965 on the search for ways to establish peace on a lasting basis. While I admire the logic and the approach taken by Mr. Lippmann in his article as well as the feelings they inspire, I feel I cannot agree with one of the points made by the distinguished American journalist.

Mr. Lippmann writes : "... War between nuclear powers can no longer be an instrument of their national policy. This will still be the case even if, as is most probable, a considerable number of states acquire nuclear weapons. For no nation can risk the use of these weapons anywhere because, having these weapons it is subject itself to fearful retaliation... Therefore, the

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The arms race, the gravest issue of our time

prospect of averting great war by mutual deterrence is a reasonably good prospect."

Unfortunately, military conflicts have their own laws, or rather, they do not obey the laws of common sense. The events of last June in the Middle East are proof that recourse to arms between states or groups of states is neither impossible nor infrequent. Can we really therefore be sure that if armed conflicts occurred between "small" nations possessing nuclear weapons that the deterrent factor would hold true and that these nations would not make use of every weapon in their arsenal ?

I am more inclined to agree with another American journalist, John Gunther, when he says that in the event that all countries gained possession of atomic weapons even the smallest country could spark off a world conflagration.

EVEN a tiny country with a per capita revenue from 22 to 25 times smaller than that of the United States may soon be in a position, I believe, to produce atomic weapons. Today some 10 to 15 countries possess nuclear reactors destined for peaceful purposes. But technical advances and the dissemination of scientific data are such that, with the reduction in the cost of producing nuclear arms, soon there will be not just 10 to 15 countries but 50 or more *potentially* capable of undertaking the manufacture of weapons of mass destruction.

For these reasons the conclusion of an agreement on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons seems to me particularly urgent. Most people are familiar with the arguments for and against this question. They have been voiced repeatedly at the Geneva disarmament meetings, in diplomatic circles and in the world press. The most telling argument against a non-proliferation treaty stresses that such a treaty would perpetuate the monopoly in atomic weapons of the present nuclear nations. This overlooks the point that an agreement on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons is not an end in itself but only a first indispensable step towards the total banning of these weapons and their destruction in arsenals everywhere in the world. Furthermore, should such a non-proliferation treaty become a reality, it is proposed that the non-nuclear powers would be completely guaranteed against any possible nuclear attack by a nuclear power.

Another argument against non-proliferation holds that the banning of production of nuclear weapons (as well as the control necessary to enforce the ban) would hamper technical development in the contracting countries by preventing them from using atomic energy for peaceful purposes. It should not be difficult, however, to devise forms of control that would not prejudice a nation's industrial development. Furthermore, the pooling of knowledge and research in the peaceful use of atomic energy would increase as the possibility of its being employed in the manufacture of arms was eliminated.

It is easy to understand—though not always easy to approve—the reasons that prompt nations to keep arms in their arsenals. But the sums spent are staggering. In 1964 the world poured down the drain the astronomical sum of 120,000 million dollars for armaments. The figure is considerably higher today. If some imaginary inhabitant of another solar system was to visit our planet he would no doubt find it hard to understand why we Earthlings squander our resources and energies so uselessly.

The examples of Vietnam and the Middle East make it abundantly clear that in this day and age no problem can be resolved by resort to war. And even less so by resorting to nuclear weapons. The problem of armaments today and their destructive nature is thus the most poignant issue of our time.

IN 1967, the U.S.S.R. will spend 14,500 million roubles (13.2 per cent of its budget) on defence. (1) There are undoubtedly many ways in which this money could be usefully employed in the Soviet Union. The United States spends even huger sums on arms, including the war in Vietnam. And it too still has many social problems to solve, bottlenecks in education, public health and science, where these resources now spent on arms, could be usefully employed.

On the assumption that arms expenditure remained at the present level (which no one really wants), the Soviet Union will spend 230,000 million roubles in the course of the next 20 years. If general and complete disarmament were to become a reality, and supposing even that 20 per cent of the money saved by disarmament were diverted for the developing countries, the U.S.S.R. would still have 230,000 million roubles left over for useful purposes. The money could be spent for an infinite variety of purposes, to raise the standard of living of the Soviet people, to launch large-scale development projects in Siberia, irrigate desert lands, etc...

A look at a map of world development shows us that entire continents are in need of resources and assistance to carry through their full development. To cite only one example, the harnessing of the world's water resources could transform vast regions of our planet. In Asia, the Indus and the Mekong, the Tigris and Euphrates ; in Africa, the Nile and its tributaries, and the Congo ; in Latin America, the Parana and the Amazon.

Mankind is only now becoming aware of the great riches and possibilities at its disposal. Were these to be effectively exploited, they could eliminate hunger, sickness and many other problems due to low living standards, such as illiteracy which still affects many hundreds of millions of the inhabitants of developing countries. By the rational use of its energy and intelligence, mankind could fulfil its destiny at a much more rapid pace, and even on a universal scale now that man is moving beyond the limits of the earth's gravity.

In ancient times, people used to dream about the "Golden Age". But in the times of Plato or Thomas More, this was in fact a Utopia, a mere dream of happiness. Today, with the help of electronic machines we can calculate the extent to which progress in various spheres of human existence would be speeded up should an epoch of general peace and complete disarmament be ushered in.

(1) Editor's note: The U.S.S.R. does not include research and development costs in its defence budget. Total actual defence expenditure for 1966 has been estimated at over 35,000 million dollars. (The exchange rate of the rouble is one rouble = 90 U.S. cents.)

Xenophobia and racism are intellectual constructs that have taken root in the human mind over the centuries. Legal measures are proving inadequate, as they only touch the visible tip of the iceberg. An intellectual strategy is needed, in order to reach into the historical and cultural depths of these plagues, and to eliminate them from the minds of humans.

RACISM IS A MUTANT

© Ivan de Monbrison

Racism is a mutant.

"The womb is fertile still, from which the foul beast came," wrote the German playwright, Berthold Brecht, when the Second World War was at its height. The solemnity of this phrase still resounds today.

The recent victory of Barack Obama in the US presidential elections is, indeed, a blow to racism and could have significant repercussions. We could hardly fail to be overjoyed that Martin Luther King's dream has finally come true. But, at the same time, how can we ignore the inter-ethnic violence that broke out earlier this year in Kenya, the country where the President-elect's father was born?

Racism is a mutant. Before we have even finished battling its older manifestations – anti-Semitism, and racism against black people and Arabs – we are already seeing a resurgence of hatred in other guises. Especially since the 11 September 2001 attacks, the alarming notion of potentially terrorist communities has emerged, showing just how dangerous it can be to lump together certain acts with factors such as race, culture and religion.

Racism did not fall from the sky

This kind of amalgam obscures an analysis or understanding of racism. There was a time when racist ideas were peddled by parties clearly identified as belonging to the extreme right. But, gradually, under the pretext of defending national identity, and combating illegal immigration or terrorism, inherently racist arguments have crept into the electoral campaigns of democratic parties. Alliances within certain governments are allowing nationalist and extreme right parties to implement their xenophobic and racist ideals, by giving them a democratic legitimacy.

The use of racism for electoral or political ends is now being complemented by an intellectual or scientific legitimisation of racism and xenophobia, as seen in the declarations of well-known public figures, university research and mass market publications.

To take just one example, there was the theory of the clash of civilisations, developed by the American academic, Samuel Huntington in the mid-1990s, according to which the West would be threatened by China and Islam. A few years later, in his book, Who Are We? he went on to ponder the supposed threat to American identity posed by Latin-Americans living in the USA.

Racist or xenophobic ideas expressed by people who have enjoyed fame at a certain moment in history gradually filter into politics, religion, literature, education and the media, ending up by taking root in people's minds. The distorted image of Muslims did not begin with 11 September. It is the result of a lengthy intellectual process that started with the first encounters between Islam and Christianity. The distorted image of black people is the fruit of an intellectual process that legitimised the transatlantic slave-trade and justified the sale of human beings by proving their inferiority, by demonising them, and reducing them to mere objects, turning to theories and laws for support. In other words, racism has deep, cultural and historical roots, and did not just fall from the sky one day.

If the clash of civilisations is an illusion, multiculturalism is a reality. Let us take the example of the new Europe. National identities le-

© CARF/Gregory J. Smith

The distorted image of dark-skinned people is the fruit of intellectual effort to justify slavery.

gitimately inherited by nation states rub shoulders every day with the identities of other ethnic, cultural and religious communities. The former feel threatened and the latter, frustrated.

A deafening silence

This frustration does not just come from the political, economic and social marginalisation of people whom we ask to divest themselves of their identity, to stuff their memories in an old trunk and take on, as in France, the costume of the Republic, the symbol of their new identity. The roots of this frustration plunge deep into history. But public debate on the deeper causes of the presence of these communities on European soil is virtually non-existent. Colonialism and the slave trade are glossed over or suppressed as chapters in history. After all, we had to wait until the international conference on racism in Durban (South Africa) in 2001 for the transatlantic slave trade finally to be recognised as a crime against humanity. Distorting or ignoring certain historical realities, preventing them from passing into the national memory, can only lead to flare-ups, like those that erupted in French suburbs two years ago.

We might wonder if, in the process of unification, Europe has not overlooked a fundamental problem – the creation of a new identity, in other words, the multiculturalism that defines it today. Looking at certain immigration policies, we might ask if Europe is even aware that immigrants are also carriers of humanity, and that multiculturalism is mutually enriching. Foreigners who come to live in Europe have to adapt to the social rules of their host country. That is not in question. But they must also be able to plant a few beautiful flowers in Europe's garden.

Multiculturalism at the core of the struggle

Multiculturalism is at the core of contemporary manifestations of racism and xenophobia, and it is around multiculturalism that the struggle against racism must be shaped.

Rapidly spreading outbreaks of violence between ethnic and religious groups can be witnessed around the world, showing that a purely legislative strategy is not enough. It is essential to continue to pass laws, and to draft regulations and other national or international texts condemning racism, discrimination and xenophobia, but this only strikes at the visible tip of the iceberg. What render the womb fertile, in the words of Brecht, are the deeper sources of racism, which cannot be influenced by legislation alone.

It is essential to have an intellectual and ethical strategy. Without this, we will not be able to shake the racist mentality. It means getting to the historical and cultural basis of racism; uniting against the fecundity of racist arguments, against their use by politicians and their normalisation by the media. It means recognising the reality of cultural, ethnic and religious diversity as the basis for dialogue between civilisations, on the national as well as the international stage - in a word, learning to live together.

In order to oust racist ideology, it is necessary to develop an archaeology of the deep-seated causes of racism. Anti-racist ideology must follow the same paths which racism has used to insinuate itself – politics, religion, literature, education and the media – to end up by taking root in the minds of men and women.

Doudou Diène,
former director of UNESCO's Division of Intercultural Dialogue and United Nations special rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism from 2002 - 2008.

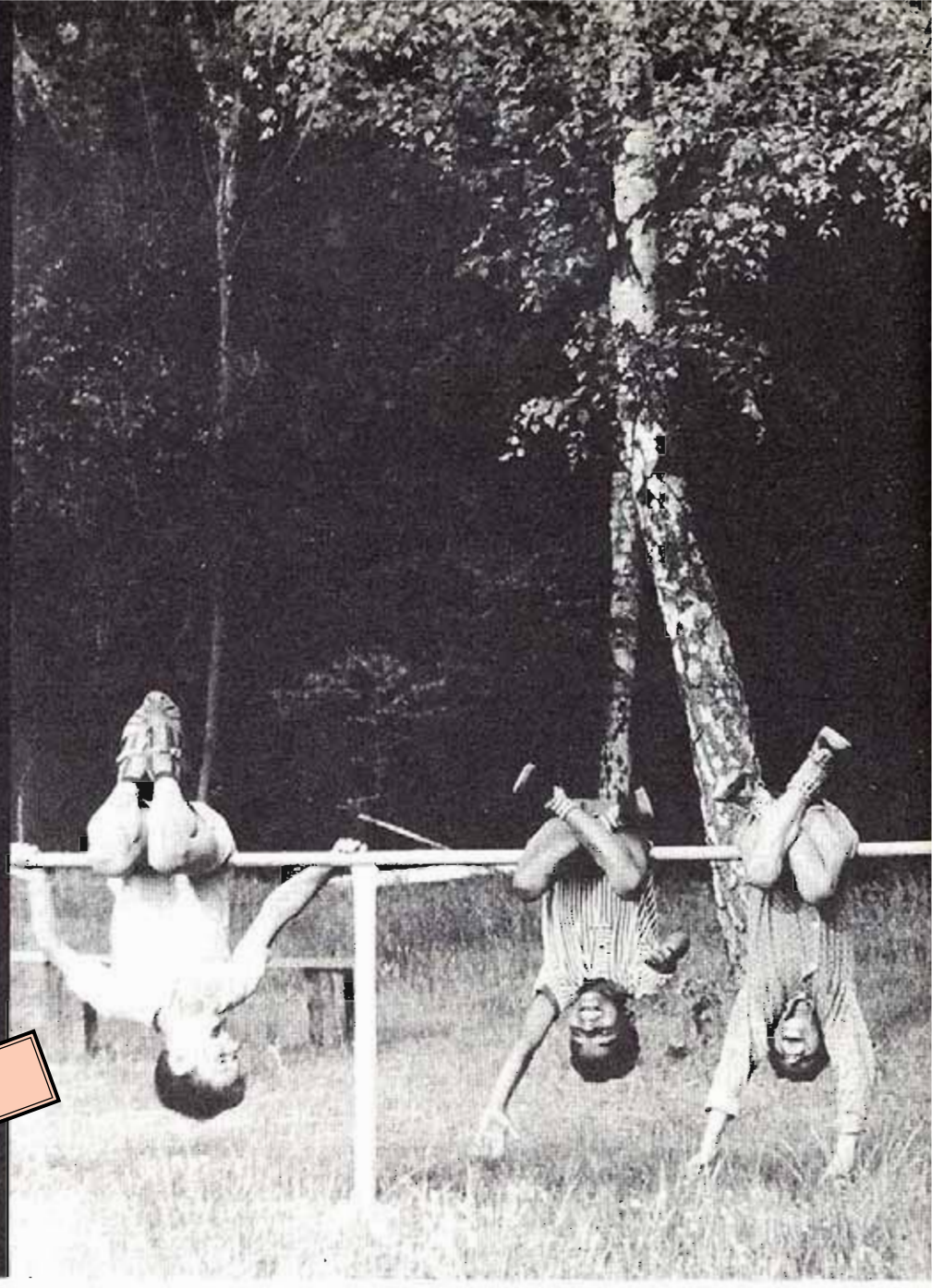
© François Lafite

The crisis in the suburbs in France. Paris, Gare du Nord train station, April 2006.

WITHOUT DISTINCTION OF RACE

Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status...

— Article 2 of the Universal Declaration



THE COURIER, 1968

THE UBIQUITOUS SHADOW OF RACISM

22 **by John Rex**

DESPITE the defeat of the Nazis and their allies and the setting up of the United Nations Organization in 1945, racism continues to haunt the world today. Men are denied employment, housing and educational opportunities because of their skin colour; some rich countries still have racial immigration laws to keep out

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JOHN REX, *professor of Social Theory and Institutions at the University of Durham, England, has been concerned with racial questions for many years, and in particular the problems of racial prejudice and the integration of minorities in large metropolises. He has written widely on these matters and is the author, with R.S. Moore, of "Race, Community and Conflict", just published for the Institute of Race Relations by Oxford University Press, London, 1967.*

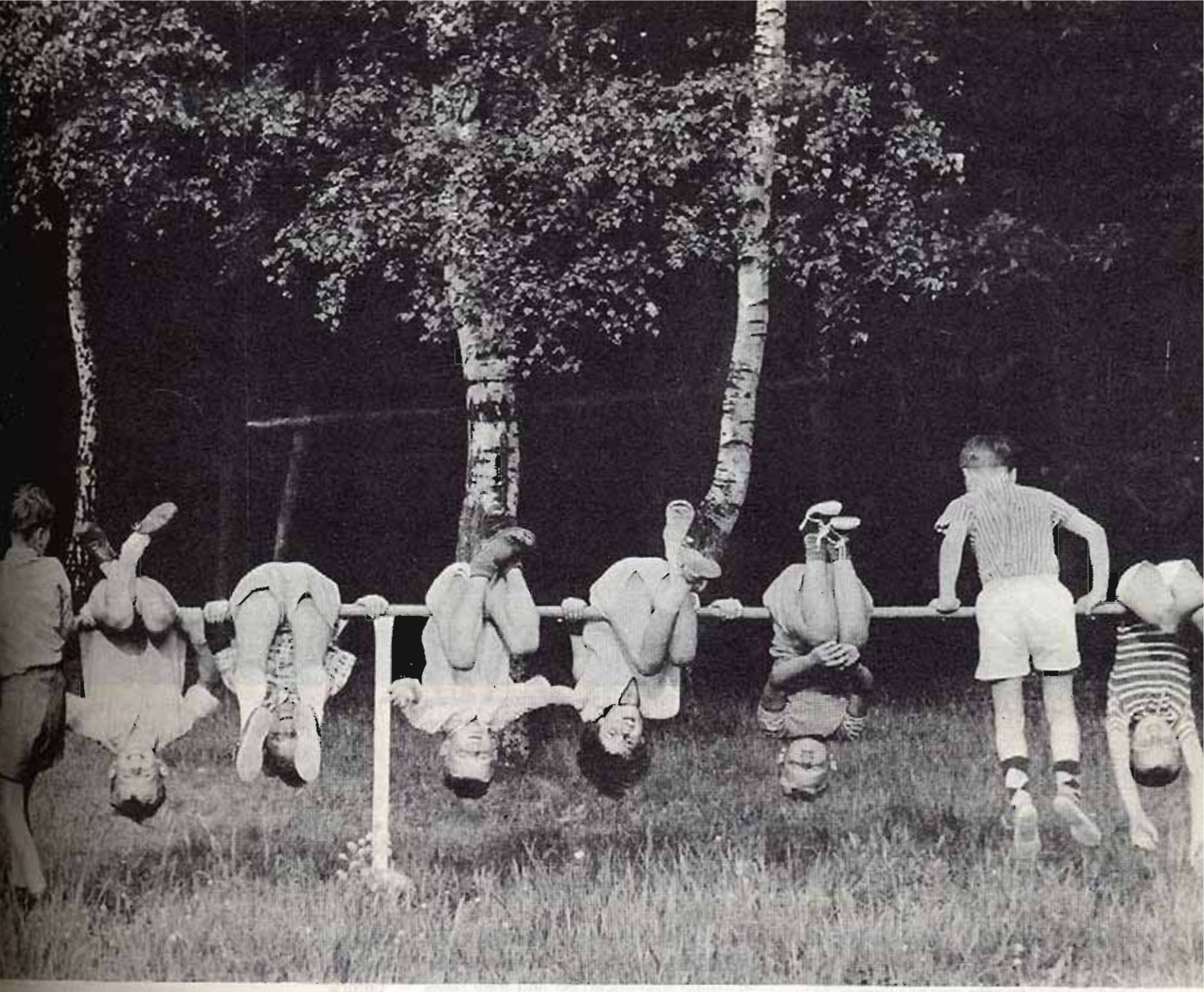

Photo © Hallwag - Marianne Sin-Pfältzer; from "Fred und Peter", Ed. Hallwag, Berne and Stuttgart, 1966.

immigrants from poorer and hungrier lands; political leaders are imprisoned for life for demanding that all races should have the same political rights; and even in the cities of the affluent Western world the Negro ghettoes burn, signalling to the world the blank despair of their inhabitants.

The most striking instance of racism in the world today is that of the system of Apartheid in South Africa. Apartheid is not as some people may still imagine a serious attempt to provide equal though separate facilities for all races. It is segregation carried through by men with white skins to their own advantage and to the disadvantage of the black and coloured populations.

Its viciousness lies not solely in the fact that different "races" must live in different areas, but far more in the fact that the areas assigned to the non-White groups are the overcrowded and eroded parts of the countryside. Inevitably those assigned to living there would face starvation unless they went as migrants and transients to seek work in the White areas. So what the theory of Apartheid means is this: that black men will work for white so long as political power lies where it does.

Such a system as this is the product of conquest and of the monopoly of political power by a conquering group. The conquerors seize upon the fact of skin colour in order to imply that the inequality which they have created is given by Nature, that it is the inevitable consequence of biological differences, or even that it is the will of God.

Such a political system could have been established in many parts of the colonial world, but the process of decolonization set in train by the victory of 1945 and assisted by United Nations action succeeded in many countries in opening equal opportunities to all. Hence today we see many cases where those who govern a newly independent country are the children of peasants or of political prisoners.

But where White supremacy and Apartheid prevail, coloured people must either accept their inferior lot or be condemned for life to an island prison. A similar future is inevitable in other countries if their present political leaders establish governments

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Photo © Rapho - Janine Niépce

THE RIGHT TO HUMAN DIGNITY

Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.

— Article 22 of the Universal Declaration

THE SHADOW OF RACISM *(Continued)*

Wiping out discrimination— first step to exploding racist theories

based upon inequality of political rights between races.

But racism and its social consequences are evident not only in the former colonial territories. They are an ever present feature of the life of advanced industrial countries. Increasingly in some at least of these countries the traditional political issues pale into insignificance beside the problem of racial inequality and men's attempt to fight against it.

Inevitably in the post 1945 world, with the advanced countries of Europe and North America undergoing a period of unparalleled economic prosperity, immigrants have come to their cities from the poorer countries, from the rural areas and from the areas where the old slave plantations were.

There is much evidence to suggest that this migration has not represented an uncontrolled and uncontrollable flood, for the immigrants have exercised their own immigration con-

Nevertheless this is precisely how this immigration has been perceived in the countries concerned and they have reacted by throwing up barriers either to immigration itself or to full equality of opportunity for the immigrant in fields such as housing or employment.

Such barriers may not have an explicitly racial form. They may affect all newcomers. But there can be little doubt that coloured people are most affected by them and that the discrimination involved is widely thought to be based upon colour and race.

Hence what we see is the segregation of coloured people in squalid lodging houses if not by themselves, together with the down and outs and outcasts of the host society, as well as a denial of equal employment opportunities so that the coloured unemployment rate is often several times as high as that for the society as a whole. Such trends as these are only amplified as increasing technological

have good jobs are better housed and better paid than they have ever been before.

A majority in these circumstances can fight for justice and equality through the ballot box. For a minority the problem is more difficult. They may appeal to the courts, and this they have sometimes done with success. But where law is inadequate in scope or too tardy in redressing grievances there seems to have been no alternative open but riot, lawlessness, and civil disobedience.

In Europe's history the main themes of political change have centred on the struggle of classes, and Europeans, interpreting the politics of the colonial world, have tended to see there a retelling of their own story.

The most striking fact of the world today is that colonial people and coloured people reject these interpretations. They note that discrimination and inequality are not the lot of

workers.

Less and less are they willing to accept advice which tells them that their problems are not racial ones or that they should throw in their lot with the international working class. Instead they set alongside Europe's theories of political change, of increasing equality and welfare being achieved through working class action, their own theories of Black Power or the Colonial Revolution.

A number of recent writers have seen the divisions which are arising in the world in these terms. New divisions are opening up and new alliances are being formed. On a world scale we have the sense of what Marx saw within the nation state in the nineteenth century: the division of men into "two great warring camps". But the camps are no longer the camps of social and economic class. The "war" which we face threatens to be a race war.

In this headlong rush to disaster those who oppose racism must oppose it at its roots. They have, of course, to expose its untruth and its fallacy, but this of itself is not enough. It is necessary to find ways of protecting people against discrimination and it is necessary to understand the social and psychological causes which lead to false racial beliefs having the wide acceptance which they do. These are problems to which social scientists as well as the United Nations specialized agencies should be addressing themselves.

The declaration by biologists meeting under the auspices of Unesco in Moscow in 1964 did much to ensure that racist theories were denied any kind of scientific support. The consensus amongst biologists is now perfectly clear and it amounts to this: the inequalities which we observe in the world today do not arise from the different genetic inheritance of men. Men are not unequal because they were born unequal. And this being so, the justice or injustice of existing inequalities is not a closed question. It is a legitimate subject of political debate.

In the fight against racism the Moscow declaration of the biologists should be used to maximum effect. Schools and the mass media can be used to ensure that the facts about the biology of race are known. Unfortunately they can also be used to

lem here is the one which always faces those who hope for reform through education. Who is to educate the educators? Clearly Unesco must do whatever it can to see to it that those who teach, either through the schools or through the media, are thoroughly educated.

Those who wish to secure justice and the elimination of racist practice cannot wait however until the whole population is educated. Nor can they await a universal "change of heart". It is precisely this notion, namely that the ending of racism requires a universal change of heart, which is used to justify its continuance. So long as there are people being deprived of a fair opportunity in life, it should be the duty of any government which truly opposes racism, to use its power to make law to prevent and to punish all acts of a racist kind.

NO ONE with any experience of legislation against racial discrimination imagines that it can be legislated out of existence. Most usually the racist finds loopholes in the law, or he proceeds to discriminate on grounds which are not overtly racist (e.g. he argues that the deprived group is uneducated or has unacceptable cultural standards). Nonetheless law itself has an educative role and the effect of only a few court cases on public opinion, especially among those who have no strong racist views, can be considerable.

It is precisely where law fails that the deprived and underprivileged are likely to take the law into their own hands. Urban riots and theories like that of Black Power are, more than anything else, assertions that the law has failed in its responsibilities. The end to violence and lawlessness can lie only in the law doing what violence claimed to do, namely to guarantee the rights of the individual.

Finally, however, racism must be fought not merely by protecting people from the consequences of racist acts, but by eliminating those social situations which cause racism. For if we fail to do this the likelihood is that it will only re-emerge in a disguised form. The real hope in the fight against racism lies precisely in the fact that something can be done to deal with the problem at its roots.

behaviour itself has any kind of hereditary roots. It is true that it is associated in its extreme form with pathological personality characteristics and there is scope here for action by psychiatrists in eliminating it. But the fact is that the majority of those who are susceptible to racist propaganda are not sick or disturbed people in this sense. The main problem which we have to face is how racism arises in this group and how it can be stopped.

What sociologists have shown from the time of Gunnar Myrdal's great study of the American Negro onwards is that once discrimination starts, the man who is discriminated against is in fact in an inferior position and that this inferiority is used as proof of racist theory.

The problem then is to nip racism in the bud by eliminating discrimination itself. Thus discrimination in housing leads to the coloured man living in inferior conditions. These conditions are then used as a reason for not allowing him to move into better houses. The only answer to this problem is to stop the discrimination and by ensuring that all men have adequate housing remove from the public mind the image of the coloured man as a natural slum dweller.

If the social roots of racism are understood in this way there will be less chance of the development of new instances of political regimes based upon theories of racial supremacy. This is the task to which most of us must now address ourselves, a defensive task to prevent racism from winning new victories. It is a task of mobilizing understanding and goodwill wherever we can find it, in unofficial as well as in governmental quarters.

This is the least we can do. Not to do it means that the world will drift more and more towards the situation of two great warring racial camps. But if we can do it and, as it were, hold the line where it is, it may yet be possible to go on to deal with the most serious problems of all, to find the means of dealing with those cases where governments themselves are racist beyond redemption and where international sanctions have to be employed to bring them into line with the moral standards of the twentieth century.

For the past ten years, Luc Montagnier, winner of the 2008 Nobel Prize for Medicine, has been insisting that efforts to stem the AIDS epidemic must involve a combination of prevention and a therapeutic vaccine. At first, his call for a vaccine fell on deaf ears. But, today, he has high hopes that soon a therapeutic vaccine will enable a body infected with HIV to build its own defences.

LUC MONTAGNIER: BUILDING UP IMMUNITIES

© UNESCO/Michel Ravassard

Following the announcement of his Nobel Prize in medicine, Luc Montagnier gave a press conference at UNESCO on 8 October 2008.

Twenty years ago in the Courier, British scientist John R. Vane (Nobel prize in medicine 1982) stressed the importance of international cooperation in the battle against AIDS. Today, one of the principal protagonists of this cooperation, Luc Montagnier from France, lists in his interview with Jasmina Šopova the weapons we have against the pandemic, which has killed more than 25 million people in the world.

The World Foundation for AIDS Research and Prevention that you set up under the aegis of UNESCO is already 15 years old. What are its aims and what results has it produced?

The Foundation aims to promote AIDS research and prevention, especially in developing countries, which are the most affected by this disease. It sets up pilot centres in these countries to develop a triple strategy, combining prevention, education and research.

In 1996 we set up a research centre in Côte d'Ivoire with, of course, the agreement and aid of the Ivorian government at the time. We have since received the support of all the country's successive governments. The Centre is in the capital, Abidjan, but there are branches in other Ivorian towns.

We started by setting up a laboratory dedicated to isolating the virus. Today the Centre has a new building for diagnosis and the treatment of outpatients. It also has a lecture room for education and prevention. Here, we train trainers to raise awareness in the local population on AIDS prevention in the workplace. For example, most of what, in Africa, are called "the uniformed corps" (the military, police, fire fighters, customs, rangers, etc) have sent delegations for training in our Centre.

You recently opened a Centre in Cameroon, too. But, according to UNAIDS, it is mostly in Southern Africa that the epidemic is reaching disastrous proportions.

Although the figures for West Africa are less alarming than those for Southern Africa, they are still much higher than anything we are seeing in industrialised countries. The rate of infection in Côte d'Ivoire is currently running at about 5.7%. This is not negligible.

We looked into the possibility of opening a centre in South Africa a few years ago. But at that time the authorities there were not convinced that the virus that we had isolated was the cause of AIDS, and so they did not offer their support. In the Congo, Gabon and Tanzania, the Heads of state were interested, but we came up against the question of funding.

It should be pointed out that the Foundation can only act if States support it, by providing land or funding. The Centre in Cameroon is funded by the government and aid from developed countries, such as Italy. I should also say that the government of Cameroon is making remarkable efforts in terms of youth education. I was surprised to visit schools where children aged 8 to 10 knew all about AIDS.

The Abidjan Centre operates partially with its own funds. A large number of patients use it – those who can afford it, pay, of course. Those who cannot, do not pay. Treatment is often provided free,

© Adam Cohn

Certain practices, such as scarification, facilitate HIV transmission.

thanks to government policy and aid from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM).

Have you run into any cultural obstacles?

Africa has its specific problems. It is therefore extremely important to take the cultural context into account. Certain local practices facilitate transmission of the virus, such as ritual scarring of newborns, or childbirth without sterile instruments.

Often, women come into the maternity clinic in good health and leave HIV-positive, because of the re-use of non-sterile medical equipment. The main reason is a lack of resources, but there is also a lack of information. Babies of working mothers are sometimes infected by the milk of wet-nurses who take care of them.

At the same time, many people do not want to be tested for HIV, for fear of stigmatisation. Our role is to convince them to be tested so that they can then be treated. But when they are treated, some abandon the therapy for financial reasons as soon as they start to feel better. The result is that they fall ill again.

Do you work with traditional healers?

We could definitely envisage working with traditional practitioners. But it is not easy to regulate their products, since their composition is a secret, passed down from generation to generation. And, because they cannot be patented, their products are of no interest to the pharmaceutical industry.

In our Abidjan Centre we tested a product from Japan, based on fermented papaya extract. The Japanese hold the secret of how it is made, but here is an example of a well-defined product, according to pharmaceutical criteria, and which has been subject to controlled clinical trials. Each batch is identical, which is not always the case with plant extracts.

Trials showed that this product is not a replacement for triple therapy, of course, but it did enhance its beneficial effects on the patients' immune system. We have carried out a second clinical trial and are waiting for the results.

We are also testing other immunostimulants. If the therapeutic vaccine that we are currently working on is to succeed, the patient's immune system has to be restored. Triple therapy alone is not enough.

You think that AIDS will be eradicated through a therapeutic vaccine. You already spoke about this in 2000 in UNESCO Sources magazine. What is the status of research today?

The concept can already be traced back ten years. In the beginning, the idea of a therapeutic vaccine got a very poor reception from French and international funding bodies. The idea was not appealing, because there were hopes for a preventive vaccine and it was thought a cure would be found.

Much has changed since then. We now know that triple therapy is not a cure and that lifelong treatment provokes toxic effects, leading to other illnesses that are often fatal.

Today the therapeutic vaccine project is mature and on a better course, because it will receive private funding.

Do you think that the Nobel Prize will help you to find other sources of funding?

I hope so! To give you a short and specific answer.

What are the advantages of a therapeutic vaccine?

Nature provides us with examples of people who are HIV carriers, but are not ill with AIDS. We are looking for a therapeutic vaccine that will increase the immunity of someone who is infected, enabling his or her body to defend itself. Someone infected will therefore be able to live with HIV without developing the illness.

It should be remembered that treatment for one person costs $12,000 a year, and it may go on for 20 or 30 years. A vaccine, on the other hand, requires just three injections: two successive shots and a booster later on. It's standard. No matter how much it costs, it will be 20 - 50 times cheaper than triple therapy.

When will we see a cure for AIDS?

Curing people and getting rid of the epidemic are two different things. Curing is indeed our immediate objective, and this will have a significant effect on the epidemic. When people know that they can be cured, they will more readily come forward for testing, those cured will no longer pass on the virus, and so on.

But we cannot expect that we will miraculously find a cure overnight. We should not count on a preventive vaccine in the immediate future. Personally, I do not believe in a preventive vaccine for AIDS. Clinical trials have shown that groups who were vaccinated were more likely to become infected than those who were not, because they believed they were protected by the vaccine, which was not the case.

AIDS could be eradicated by a combination of treatments that involves cure, information and education, especially targeted at young people in schools. Even if we find a preventive vaccine, we must still continue to educate people to behave responsibly to prevent the spread of HIV.

Co-operation — the best way to combat AIDS

John Vane

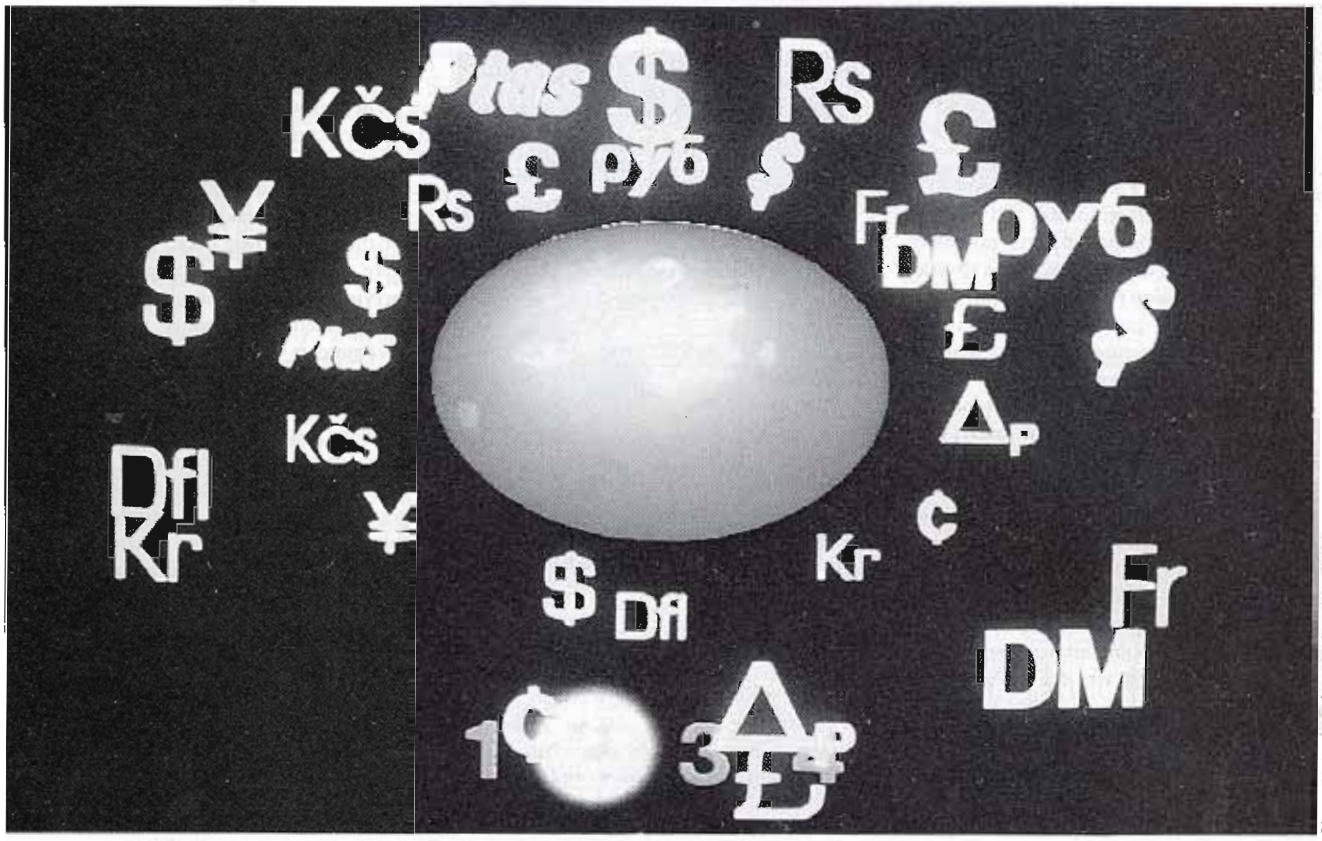

Photo United Nations University, Tokyo

▲ *"Research into the prevention and treatment of AIDS must be pooled and encouraged, rather than slowed down and overly partitioned, in particular with the co-operation of the pharmaceutical industry." This was one of the conclusions reached by the Nobel Laureate Conference held at the Elysée Palace in Paris (see page 34). Above, still from* Sharing for Survival, *a short videofilm produced by the United Nations University.*

The problem of AIDS requires a threefold solution. The first, which should certainly reduce the incidence of the disease, is that of prophylaxis by education. However, the results of the campaign waged against cigarette smoking in the United Kingdom during the last twenty years suggest that educational action will take time to bear fruit.

The other two solutions are prevention through vaccination and treatment with drugs. Both of these need enormous research and development resources. Academic research is, on the whole, being well funded. The scientific competition is enormous but it is also healthy because it leads to rapid publication and dissemination of knowledge on which others can build.

A different kind of competition is involved in the development of vaccines against AIDS by the pharmaceutical industry. Here profit rather than kudos becomes the motive.

In the last twenty years more and more drug companies have opted out of research into human vaccines because of the risks involved, mainly the potential high costs of damages claimed by patients and others against the companies for what are perceived to be side-effects of the vaccines. These risks have come to outweigh earnings from profits. Thus, only a few multinational pharmaceutical companies are now capable

of developing and testing vaccines. Of course, the case of AIDS is a special one because of the frightening prospects and so we can expect governments to relax their stringent safety regulations to speed a vaccine to the market. Nevertheless, the industry will (and indeed must) look for ways whereby the liability for perceived side-effects is carried by others. This usually means the governments which sponsor vaccination campaigns.

The third solution is to find and develop effective drugs against AIDS and it is here that we may have to look for new ways of solving old problems. Clearly new effective anti-AIDS drugs are urgently needed and will be for many years to come, to treat the millions of people already infected and all those who will become infected, because of lack of proper prophylaxis.

New drugs are a means of making new profits, and their development and marketing is a highly competitive and expensive business. One company makes a breakthrough based upon research either in house or in academia, puts large chemical resources into optimizing the desired activity and protecting the patent and then begins the laborious business of development. With the present legislation for safety, efficacy and lack of side-effects at least ten years may elapse between the discovery and marketing of a drug. In the meantime, as soon as the breakthrough is sensed, other companies put parallel chemical, pharmacological and developmental resources into finding their own patentable and profitable copy, albeit with some improvements such as less side-effects, better delivery or better patient compliance.

On the one hand, it is argued that this free competition between drug companies is healthy and, through the profit motive, leads to better and better remedies for more and more diseases. On the other hand, it is said that there are too many drugs on the market and that the World Health Organization (WHO) list of 200 essential drugs is sufficient. These contradictory views will continue and there will be a constant conflict of interests between the need of the drug companies to preserve profits and the need of governments and patients to contain their drug bills.

My purpose in raising this issue is simply to point out that under the present system of free enterprise a new drug therapy for AIDS will not be produced because drug companies wish to cure the disease, but because they wish to make a profit from it! My question is whether we can afford, both in time and monetary terms, to allow the commercial competitive process to run its course or whether we can find new solutions which will speed up the acquisition of effective drug therapy.

Certainly, governments around the world have shown that they realize the urgency of the problem by giving product licences for the only existing drug, AZT or Retrovir, with a remarkable and unprecedented alacrity. What can the industry do now?

I would suggest that this is not the time and this is not the disease for following conventional pathways. We need to find new solutions. One of these could be co-operation rather than competition between pharmaceutical companies. Already there are some areas in which there is loose co-operation between the multinational drug companies. Surely here is another one where an experimental approach could be tried. For instance, an Institute for AIDS Research, dedicated to the discovery of anti-viral drugs to combat the disease, could be funded as a co-operative venture by the pharmaceutical industry. In such an Institute the chemical skills needed to synthesize the many thousands of new compounds that may be needed before the right one is found could be co-ordinated, rather than pitted against each other. Kudos and profit would be shared equitably between the contributors to the funding of the Institute. I am sure that, given good-will between the companies, the licensing and patent lawyers would find ways of enabling co-operation to exist in the anti-AIDS field and this could well speed up the process of discovery and development.

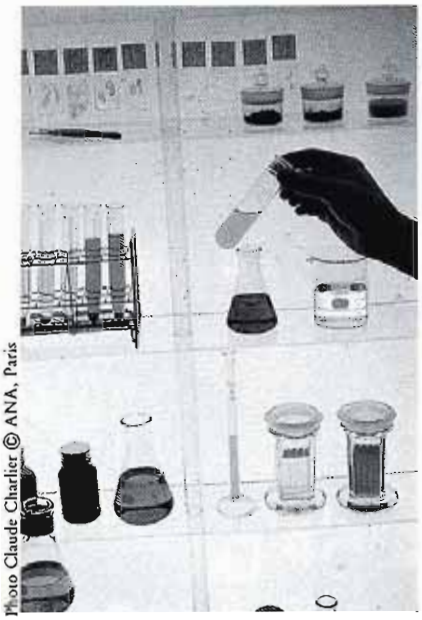

Photo Claude Charlier © ANA, Paris

▲ *"The problem of AIDS calls for a threefold solution.... prophylaxis by education, ... prevention through vaccination, and treatment with drugs." Pharmaceutical researchers are racing against time to conquer this terrible disease.*

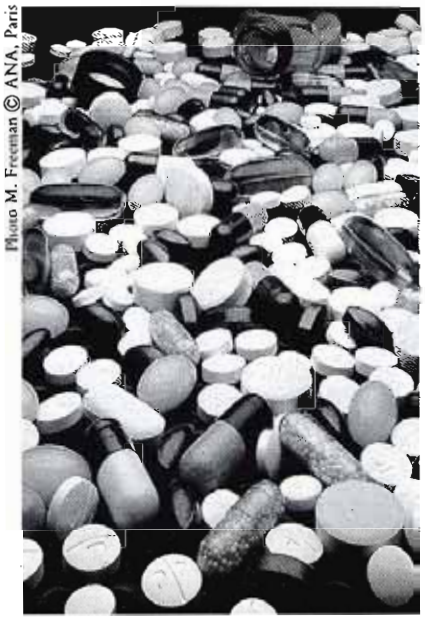

Photo M. Freeman © ANA, Paris

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There is another area in which the drug industry could make an unusually generous contribution. At present, a course of Retrovir costs around $200 per week and some patients will be taking an anti-AIDS drug for the rest of their lives. We are told that there are already 5 million people in Africa carrying AIDS and this clearly poses a special problem, for neither they nor their governments will be able to afford expensive treatments. However, a precedent has already been set: one far-sighted company has made the inspired policy decision to give the drug Ivermectin to Africa to treat river-blindness. By taking only two oral doses a year, untold numbers of people will probably be prevented from becoming blind. This remarkable and courageous decision will not only make a major contribution to the struggle against a crippling tropical disease, but will also pass over to the governments concerned the responsibility for any incidental environmental damage.

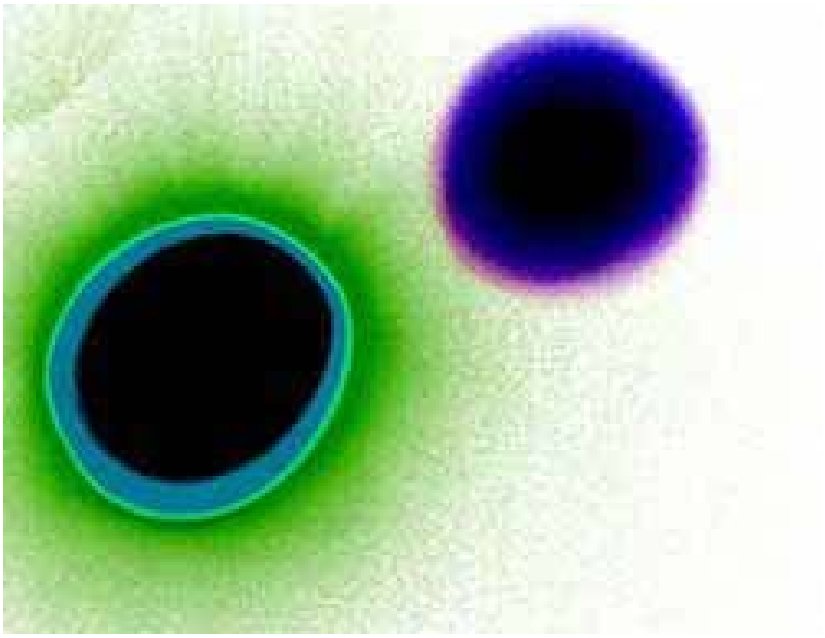
Perhaps this precedent could be a model for the pharmaceutical industry when it finds an effective anti-AIDS vaccine or drug. Let the medicine be donated to those in Africa and perhaps elsewhere who would never have a chance of buying it!

My plea, therefore, is for the drug industry to adopt a "club" approach to the conquest of this terrible disease. Pharmaceutical companies already fund academic research units in areas of discovery on an individual basis. In the case of AIDS, let them club together and do it on an industry-wide basis. They do not have to eschew the profit motive but only to modify it by jointly and generously funding chemists and biologists in a large Institute dedicated to ending this new affliction. ■

SIR JOHN ROBERT VANE, British pharmacologist, was awarded the Nobel Prize for Physiology or Medicine in 1982 (with S.K. Bergström and B.I. Samuelsson) for discoveries concerning the biochemistry and physiology of prostaglandins and related substances. He is director of the William Harvey Research Institute at St. Bartholomew's Hospital Medical College, London, and has published numerous articles and papers in the field of pharmacology.

Scientific progress can sometimes catch ethicists unawares. This was the case with the cloning of Dolly the sheep in 1997 and, today, with cybrids and nanotechnologies. The philosopher and anthropologist Georges Kutukdjian, author of the article "UNESCO and Bioethics", published in our magazine in 1994, takes a look at the latest challenges for bioethics.

HUMAN DIGNITY IN QUESTION



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Stem cells. Scientific advances modify the premises of ethical dilemmas.

At a time when scientific research is increasingly international, national legislation and biomedical practices continue to diverge, creating an appearance of disorder that hides the main issue: the treatment of life as merchandise.

"The human body and its parts shall not, as such, give rise to financial gain," stipulates the 1997 Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine (Council of Europe). Given the principle of the non-commercialisation of the human body, its parts (organs and tissues) and products (gametes, cells, etc) have long been excluded from commercial gain. But several countries are reconsidering their position. For example, France is envisaging authorising surrogate motherhood and relaxing its legislation on remuneration for donors of organs, tissues or eggs, while strictly regulating practices. The Netherlands and the United Kingdom allow free gestational surrogacy under certain conditions. The British Parliament is studying the possibility of allowing specialised agencies to receive payment in return for certain services. Although Spain has banned surrogate motherhood, Spanish couples often turn to women in Latin America to bear their children. And, today, the principle of non-commercialisation of the human body is being tested by the disparate practices and legislation in different parts of the world regarding organ and tissue transplants, removal of gametes for donation and "womb rental". The current rate for the latter is between US$60,000 - $100,000 dollars, in those States that allow it.

Meanwhile, the ethical debate on the creation of embryos is being revived with chimeric embryos, or cybrids. The procedure, derived from cloning, consists of extracting the nucleus of a non-reproductive human cell and introducing it into the ovule of a rabbit or cow. Following a two-year debate, the UK Parliament recently authorised research on cybrid embryos, while the fertilisation of animal ovules by human sperm or vice-versa is still banned. The law, dated 13 June 2008, requires their destruction at the latest 14 days after their creation and bans implantation into a human or animal uterus.

Research on cybrid embryos will undoubtedly advance our understanding of the behaviour of embryo cells during the first 14 days, as well as the mechanisms of development of serious illnesses during these first stages of life. It will also replace the ethically debatable removal of human ovules by the removal of animal ovules. Nevertheless, several scientific and ethical bodies in the UK hold the opinion that these cybrid embryos should be considered human embryos if their DNA contains human genetic material.

This latest development has shaken two basic understandings tacitly accepted by the international community for 30 years: not creating human-animal chimeras, and not implanting a human embryo in the uterus of an animal and vice-versa.

Nanotechnologies: avoiding misuse

Another scientific area providing food for thought for ethicists is nanotechnologies. Miniaturised electronic implants are increasingly being used for medical or other purposes. Alongside their potential for diagnosis, they are also being used in clinical trials to

© Minco

Nanotechnology can be applied in numerous areas of human life.

study the effects of new drugs on the nervous system. Treatments are also being perfected to re-establish communication in damaged areas of the nervous system and to destroy cancerous tumours.

We can expect a considerable boom in the use of these implants, as progress in the neurosciences enables us to understand how to influence behaviour, such as improving memory, suppressing craving in drug and alcohol dependency, etc.

Applications already extend to the treatment of water and the conservation and conversion of energy. But, at the present time, there is little reliable knowledge about the risks of nanoparticles for the environment or human health.

Furthermore, implants that use information and communications technologies (ITC) could be used for individual and social control and to gather, store, use or transfer personal data.

Nanotechnologies have reached a crossroads. Few States have legislated on their use, or at least, existing legislation has not tackled the issue of the manipulation of individuals by interfering with ITC implants, let alone the use of the personal data that they might provide.

Lessons for the future

Bioethics has been built upon respect for human dignity and the protection of human rights and basic freedoms. But a close examination of bioethics reveals that it periodically revises its paradigms and analyses in the light of the constant progress being made in life and medical sciences, and the resulting developments in applications. But this approach, far from rendering bioethics more vulnerable, anchors it in contemporary scientific reality.

Over the course of the past 20 years, ethical thinking has largely dealt with subjects that raised high hopes, anticipating their technical mastery. This was the case for xenotransplantation, i.e. the transplantation of organs from genetically modified animals in order to render them compatible with human recipients. Between 1993 and 2002, ethical reflections on this subject occupied a number of interdisciplinary working groups, universities and ethical bodies. One outcome was the drafting of a Recommendation on xenotransplantation by the Council of Europe, in June 2003. Interest in this practice, which was supposed to respond to the lack of human organs available for transplant, gradually faded as the obstacles multiplied. These difficulties were scientific, as well as cultural and religious, given a reticence or even repugnance towards the use of organs from some animals, especially pigs. But this ethical reflection may have eased the way towards social acceptance of the creation of the human-animal hybrids mentioned above.

Scientific advances are changing the terms of an ethical dilemma. Research in embryology, for example, and the long-term freezing of sperm in liquid nitrogen have enabled in vitro fertilization of women with the sperm of their deceased husbands. Even 15 years ago, this possibility led women to claim this right in the courts. Judges in certain States of the USA are favourable to such demands, while, in France, they have been rejected.

Scientific progress could also catch ethics specialists by surprise by opening up unimagined possibilities. The most striking recent example was the cloning of Dolly the sheep, announced on 24 February 1997. This was like a bolt of lightning, making headlines around the globe, from Sweden to Brazil, the Arab Emirates to Indonesia. The breakthrough also unleashed all kinds of fantasies and speculation. Both the scientific community and politicians responded quickly, with the result that the international community now has a series of safeguards regarding this practice: The Universal Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights (UNESCO, 1997 and UN, 1998), the Council of Europe's Additional Protocol to the Convention, on the Prohibition of Cloning Human Beings (1998), and the United Nations Declaration on Human Cloning (2005).

These scientific shockwaves and their technological applications bring a host of benefits, shaking our certainties as well as our uncertainties. But we must take care that the concept of "human dignity", the cornerstone of the intangibility and inalienability of human rights, is not fractured.

Georges Kutukdjian,
philosopher and anthropologist,
former Director of the Division
of the Ethics of Science and Technology
(UNESCO)

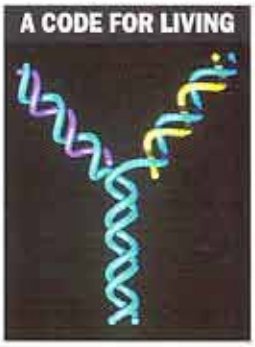
Photo 3 © Jérôme Liégeois

Nanotechnology can be applied in numerous Eleven thousand people are waiting for a transplant in France.

THE COURIER, 1994

UNESCO and bioethics

by Georges B. Kutukdjian



Through ethical reflection, humanity can now keep pace with the challenges of science instead of realizing too late when things have gone wrong

Scientific research on the human genome, and especially on gene therapy and the diagnosis of genetic diseases, has far-reaching implications for the lives of all of us—children, men and women alike. It is a field holding out immense prospects for man's self-transformation and it will, in the long run, require societies to make certain choices. As a result, it is giving rise to anxieties that may in some cases be justified but are more often irrational.

These anxieties lie behind the effort many countries are now making to look into the ethical framework of such research. Legislation is starting to be adopted to define limits for medical practice and some types of research, in order to ensure that human dignity will be respected. Two points must be stressed, however. In the first place, the type of legislation differs significantly from one country to another and we do not have any common yardstick to judge it by. Secondly, it does not exist everywhere in the world, but only in some of the industrial countries. Elsewhere, there are are still a number of grey areas surrounding research and experimentation.

It is for all these reasons that the Director-General of UNESCO decided to set up an International Bioethics Committee and invited Ms. Noëlle Lenoir, a member of the Constitutional Council of the French Republic, to preside over its deliberations.

The Committee met for the first time in September 1993 and commenced its work by identifying three priority themes. These are genetic screening and testing, the therapeutic applications of genetics research, and population genetics.

Genetic testing

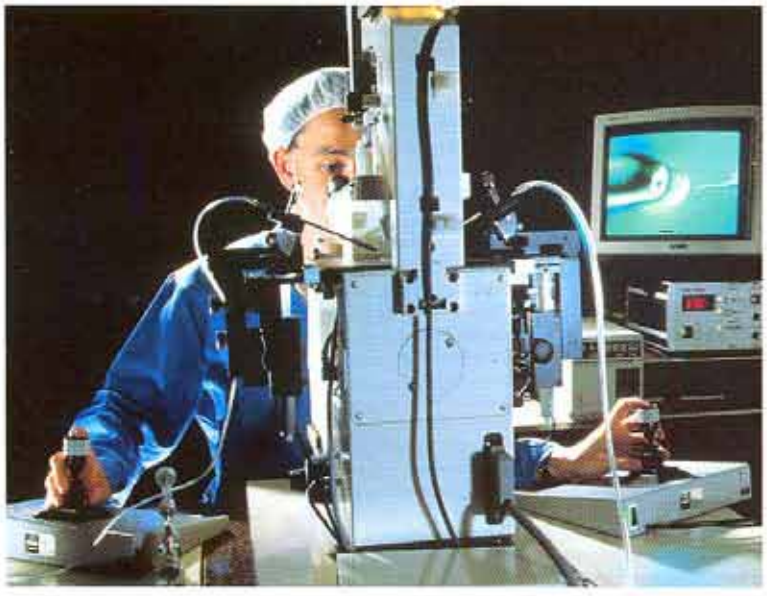
Should genetic screening be made compulsory for so-called "risk" populations or should it simply be made available to them? Should it be introduced into premarital examinations or be included in prenatal diagnosis? Should it be carried out before gamete donation or the implantation of embryos fertilized in vitro?

At the outset, a distinction must be made between two kinds of genetic tests. Tests in the first category are used to identify a particular gene which is virtually certain to bring on a hereditary disease. Those in the second category show whether or not a person has a predisposition to certain diseases and thus reveal situations involving varying degrees of probability. Depending on the environment and sundry other factors, about some of which little is known, the outward symptoms of a disease may appear in its early stages or may emerge only later, and the disease itself may vary in severity. A genetic mutation may become more dominant and grow worse from generation to generation. On the other hand, the tendency for genetic damage to occur may be reversed. In short, the same defect in a person's genotype (genetic constitution) may take different forms in his or her phenotype (the physical constitution as it interacts with the environment).

This influence of the environment on the form a genetic mutation may take brings into play the concept of the responsibility of individuals towards themselves and their families and the responsiblity of citizens towards the community. Preventive medicine could therefore be said to go hand-in-hand with predictive medicine.

Should people be told that there is a probability that they will eventually develop Huntington's chorea, for example, and transmit it to their offspring? Should their close or distant

A biologist using state-of-the-art microscope equipment to insert DNA segments into embryos.



Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde: the temptation

I knew well that I risked death; for any drug that so potently controlled and shook the very fortress of identity might, by the least scruple of an overdose or at the least inopportunity in the moment of exhibition, utterly blot out that immaterial tabernacle which I looked to it to change. But the temptation of a discovery so singular and profound at last overcame the suggestions of alarm. . . . I compounded the elements, watched them boil and smoke together in the glass, and when the ebullition had subsided, with a strong glow of courage, drank off the potion.

The most racking pangs succeeded: a grinding in the bones, deadly nausea, and a horror of the spirit that cannot be exceeded at the hour of birth or death. Then these agonies began swiftly to subside, and I came to myself as if out of a great sickness. There was something strange in my sensations, something indescribably new, and, from its very novelty, incredibly sweet. I felt younger, lighter, happier in body; within I was conscious of a heady recklessness, a current of disordered sensual images running like a mill race in my fancy, a solution of the bonds of obligation, an unknown but not an innocent freedom of the soul. I knew myself, at the first breath of this new life, to be more wicked, tenfold more wicked, sold a slave to my original evil: and the thought, in that moment, braced and delighted me like wine.

ROBERT LEWIS STEVENSON
Scottish writer
The Strange case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (1886)

and insurance companies? Can a company's medical service insist on being given the results of genetic testing?

Since genetic testing may extend over several generations and involve varying numbers of individuals, questions about the storage and confidentiality of the data are bound to arise sooner or later. How long should genetic data be kept and how can its confidentiality be guaranteed? Who should be empowered to divulge or withhold information which often involves whole families?

Similarly, if people can choose to know what their genetic future will be, can they also choose not to know? Should they or should they not be compelled to take account of the results of genetic testing?

In this regard, it is important that people should be freely able to exercise their discretion. Information that is liable to change their whole lives and force added responsibilities on them should not expose them to any form of discrimination. Genetic testing should not prompt the authorities to adopt repressive policies leading to a restriction of individual freedoms.

Another ethical issue connected with genetic testing is bound up with the need to ensure that all countries, including the least advanced ones, reap benefit from them, so that they too can join the fight against hereditary diseases.

Therapeutic applications

The first question that has to be raised relates to the pre-implantation diagnosis performed on artificially fertilized embryos which, in view of its greater simplicity and lower cost, is likely to replace gene therapy in cases of rare genetic diseases. This involves a choice that is already framed in ethical terms.

The second question is whether the work currently being done is not liable to become narrowly focused on looking for the genes that account for people's behaviour—their sexuality, for example—their talents and abilities, or even their "deviances". This could lead to a kind of genetic reductionism whereby people would be defined exclusively in terms of their genome, or to a situation in which some individuals or groups of individuals might be stigmatized by society, ostracized or even eliminated. This would be tantamount to adopting eugenic policies.

There are other problems. We know, for example, that through agriculture, gene therapy could bring about radical changes in public health. A diet of genetically modified plants could become a regular form of treatment, a sort of oral "vaccine" given in repeated doses. However, the *in vivo* reproduction of these plant species would be liable to give rise to new recombined organisms that could become vectors for diseases. In such an eventuality, what kind of preventive measures and legislation should be instituted?

The same applies, *mutatis mutandis*, to the use of human genes for the development of transgenic

animals. What limits should be set on the supply of human genetic material? Should it be reserved solely for therapeutic purposes, say for xenografts, and its use for any other purpose, such as for improving livestock, be ruled out?

We have to accept that the issue of transgenesis applied to the human species now has to be faced. Reports of germ-line therapy experiments on embryonic cells or spermatozoa have recently been published in scientific journals.

As a result of the rapid strides being made by genetic engineering, it is now possible to store gametes and germ cells in "banks" for possible future use, such as for autografts. This practice is now regarded as acceptable, under certain conditions, for young cancer patients who have to undergo X-ray treatment or chemotherapy and who wish to preserve their chances of later conceiving children by in vitro fertilization techniques. With the exception of these medical cases, the storage of gametes and germ cells poses the problem of the storage of human products generally, as well as that of storage methods and the criteria governing access to such "banks".

Lastly, careful thought has to be given to the best ways of protecting the intellectual property of researchers whose inventions have industrial or commercial applications. Should such protection be regarded as akin to copyright? How is it possible to regulate access to genetic data banks and their possible industrial or commercial uses?

First, steps must be taken to secure the free and informed consent of population groups participating in major surveys on population genetics. The scientific aims and objectives of the surveys should be clearly explained to them.

The results of these surveys should not be detrimental to those who participate, nor should they lead to discrimination against them. Nor should they be allowed to lead to the establishment of a genetic pseudo-classification of the population groups involved.

These results should also be communicated to the individuals and population groups concerned. Access to genetic data banks where the information is stored, the processing of this information and its use should be rigorously defined.

The human genome project

Deciphering the totality of genetic information on the human race is an ambitious project which calls for international co-operation. The ensuing progress will help to prevent and treat genetic diseases which are incurable today. It will also make a significant contribution to understanding the structure and the functions of the genetic system and individual development, as well as the "natural history" of DNA.

Such fundamental knowledge of human beings clearly raises ethical, social and legal problems, and consequently it is not surprising that UNESCO attaches very great importance to it. The human genome project has a place among UNESCO's activities because of UNESCO's ethical mission and its competence in the fields of education, science and culture. UNESCO offers an ideal environment for multidisciplinary debates on the different aspects of study of the human genome.

UNESCO is thus fully involved in this project. By organizing or encouraging meetings, holding workshops, helping to finance training programmes and awarding short-term scholarships, UNESCO is seeking to do three things: to encourage international co-operation and co-ordination, to stimulate debate on the many repercussions of the human genome project, and to promote the participation of countries of the South and East. The sharing of knowledge between North and South, East and West is, after all, an ethical imperative in itself. ■

St. Cosmas and St. Damian graft onto the deacon Giustiniano the leg of a recently deceased Ethiopian. 15th-century fresco by Fra Angelico in the San Marco Museum, Florence.
(Illustration taken from the catalogue of *La vie en kit, éthique et biologie* © Fondation de l'Arche de la Fraternité, Paris).

GEORGES B. KUTUKDJIAN is the head of UNESCO's Bioethics Unit. A philosopher and anthropologist, he has published a number of papers on kinship systems and proverbs, and literary essays on Marguerite Duras, Kafka and Proust. He was the co-editor, with Antonio Papisca, of a collective work on the rights of peoples, published in 1991 by CEDAM, Padua (Italy).

Proud of Africa's progress yet sceptical about governments, Wangari Maathai from Kenya, 2004 Nobel Peace Prize winner, believes that African leaders are largely responsible for the ills that plague the continent. Instead of complaining, they should better control the exploitation of African resources and populations.

WANGARI MAATHAI : HOPES AND DISAPPOINTMENTS

© Frederick Onyango

Wangari Maathai with Barack Obama, the new president of the United States, in Nairobi, Kenya, in 2006.

En December 1999, this environmental activist, founder of the Green Belt Movement, gave an interview to our Courier correspondent, Ethirajan Anbarasan from India. Three years later, she began her political career in the Kenyan government. Five years after that, she received the Nobel Peace Prize. And now, nine years later, she has given another interview to the same journalist, who is working in London for the BBC World Service..

The industrialized nations have allocated more than a trillion dollars to avert a global financial melt down. Some African leaders say that a fraction of that amount, less than two per cent, would have solved most of Africa's problems? What's your reaction to that comment?

It is easy for the African leadership to complain about the rest of the world for not taking care of the problems of Africa. I think that with a lot of respect, the African leadership is largely to be blamed for the current ills of the continent. It is largely them who have allowed their resources to be exploited and their people to be exploited.

It is interesting to see that the governments in industrialized western countries are trying to save their banks and financial institutions. But I am unable to understand the fact that many of these banks were not regulated. So, this shows that if you do not regulate businesses, it is possible for greed, for selfishness to creep in. This is what we see in many developing countries where banks and businesses from outside come and exploit the local resources, without sharing the profits equitably and without worrying about the environment.

Why didn't we regulate them? Why didn't we control them? It is up to the African leadership to protect their people from exploitation. The African continent has lots of resources and wealth but the African leadership has not adequately invested in our people and protected our people from exploitation.

You served as Assistant Minister for Environment and Natural Resources in Kenya's ninth Parliament, from 2003 to 2007. Were you happy with your contribution?

Well, I am very happy that I was part of the pro-democracy movement that eventually brought a more accountable government to our country. We were elected with so much of hope from the people. The Kenyan people had hoped that we would end corruption, give good governance, and establish institutions that would protect people, that would protect farmers from middlemen.

But I think our government was eventually dragged into corruption and mismanagement by our own ministers. We failed to honour each other's promises and we failed to honour the promises we made to the people, like creating a new constitution and sharing

© Wanjira Mathai

Wangari Maathai founded the Green Belt Movement, the biggest reforestation project in Africa, in 1977.

power. We eventually ended up the way you saw in January this year (during the post-poll violence) when we lost a lot of our people.

I have been happy with the progress, at the same time it is very disappointing to see how quickly politicians can be so selfish and forget their commitment to the people.

In an interview to the UNESCO Courier nine years ago, you had expressed concern over the lack of global attention towards environmental issues. Do you think awareness on environmental issues and global warming has improved now?

No doubt, there has been a great improvement in the last ten years or so. People are realizing that environment is indeed a source of conflict especially in areas like sharing of water resources and land.

Now with the problem of climate change, we are realizing that climate is very central to our living in peace with each other. Yes, there has been a great awareness, but still there is a lot needs to be done. For example, problems relating to stopping green house gas emissions.

Are you happy with promises made by industrialized nations in terms of carbon emission cuts?

Yes, I think it is encouraging to see that the industrialized countries. Who have largely been responsible for greenhouse gas emissions are now working together and willing to take action and encouraging the rest of the world to do the same. I am particularly happy that they are now talking about the need to preserve world's forests. I sincerely hope that they will help those governments which have large amounts of forests to maintain, like the Amazon forests in Brazil, the rainforests in Congo and the forests in Southeast Asia. I hope they will include the preservation of forests in their main environmental agenda.

Did winning the Nobel Peace Prize encourage you to be even more active?

The Nobel Prize has really brought a lot of attention to our work focusing on promoting environmental awareness, human rights and good governance in Africa. I have been invited by a large number of people who want to share the message and who also want me to see their work. So, I have been travelling around the world talking about the need to take care of the environment and about good governance.

We have not enjoyed peace or enjoyed good management of our natural resources, and therefore have had massive poverty and a lot of conflict. So, during my travels around the globe I have been trying to explain the link between taking care of the environment and peace.

How do see the role of women in politics in Africa? Are they finally emerging out in a male-dominated territory?

There has been a great improvement. There has been a sustained campaign by women to raise awareness of the need for them to be given opportunities beyond the traditional roles into various professions. We see as doctors, we see them as lawyers and we see them as teachers. Of course being a politician, being part of a government with the ability to serve the people is such an important symbolic position for women.

There is no doubt that women like Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, the president of Liberia, have done so well in Africa. It was nice to see an African woman elected as president of a country. It is important to recognize that we are now benefiting from many years of struggle by women in Africa. I think women can give more accountable and responsible governance and show respect for human rights.

© Yves Herman

Nobel Peace Prize award ceremony, 2004.

THE COURIER, 1999

WANGARI MUTA MAATHAI: KENYA'S GREEN MILITANT

INTERVIEW BY ETHIRAJAN ANBARASAN, *UNESCO COURIER* JOURNALIST.

A noted environmental and pro-democracy activist hopes the next millennium will see a new African leadership that puts people first.

WANGARI MUTA MAATHAI

You once said that the quality of the environment cannot be improved unless and until the living conditions of ordinary people are improved. Could you enlarge on this?
If you want to save the environment you should protect the people first, because human beings are part of biological diversity. And if we can't protect our own species, what's the point of protecting tree species? It sometimes looks as if poor people are destroying the environment. But they are so preoccupied with their survival that they are not concerned about the long-term damage they are doing to the environment simply to meet their most basic needs.
So it is ironic that the poor people who depend on the environment are also partly responsible for its destruction. That's why I insist that the living conditions of the poor must be improved if we really want to save our environment.
For example, in certain regions of Kenya, women walk for miles to get firewood from the forests, as there are no trees left nearby. When fuel is in short supply, women have to walk further and further to find it. Hot meals are served less frequently, nutrition suffers, and hunger increases. If these women had enough resources they would not be depleting valuable forest.

What is at stake in the forests of Kenya and East Africa today?
Since the beginning of this century, there has been a clear tendency to cut down indigenous forests and to replace them with exotic species for commercial exploitation. We've now become more aware of what this involves and have realized that it was wrong to cut down indigenous forests, thereby destroying our rich biological diversity. But much damage has already been done.

MEMBER OF KENYA'S GREEN BELT MOVEMENT.

‘The act of planting trees conveys a simple message. It suggests that at the very least you can plant a tree and improve your habitat. It increases people’s awareness that they can take control of their environment, which is the first step toward greater participation in society’

When the Green Belt Movement (see box page 47) started its campaign in 1977 to plant trees, Kenya had about 2.9 per cent of forest cover. Today the forested area has further dwindled to around two per cent. We are losing more trees than we are planting.
The other important issue is that the East African environment is very vulnerable. We are very close to the Sahara desert, and experts have been warning that the desert could expand southwards like a flood if we keep on felling trees indiscriminately, since trees prevent soil erosion caused by rain and wind. By clearing remaining patches of forests we are in essence creating many micro-Sahara deserts. We can already see evidence of this phenomenon.
We hold civic education seminars for rural people, especially farmers, as part of campaigns to raise public awareness about environmental issues. If you were to ask a hundred farmers how many of them remember a spring or a stream that has dried up in their lifetime, almost 30 of them would raise their hands.

What has your Green Belt Movement (GBM) achieved and in particular to what extent has it prevented environmental degradation in Kenya?
The most notable achievement of the GBM in my view has been in raising environmental awareness among ordinary citizens, especially rural people. Different groups of people now realize that the environment is a concern for everybody and not simply a concern for the government. It is partly because of this awareness that we are now able to reach out to decision-makers in the government. Ordinary citizens are challenging them to protect the environment.
Secondly, the GBM introduced the idea of environmental conservation through trees because trees meet many basic needs of rural communities. We started out by planting seven trees in a small park in Nairobi in 1977. At that time we had no tree nursery, no staff and no funds, only a conviction that ordinary country people had a role to play in solving environmental problems. We went on from there and now we have planted over 20 million trees all over Kenya.
The act of planting trees conveys a simple message. It suggests that at the very least you can plant a tree and improve your habitat. It increases people’s awareness that they can take control of their environment, which is the first step toward greater participation in society. Since the trees we have planted are visible, they are the greatest ambassadors for our movement..

Despite the Rio earth summit of 1992 and the Kyoto climate summit in 1997, there has been no significant progress in environmental protection programmes and campaigns at a global level. Why?
Unfortunately, for many world leaders development still means extensive farming of cash crops, expensive hydroelectric dams, hotels, supermarkets, and luxury items, which plunder human and natural resources. This is short-sighted and does not meet people’s basic needs–for adequate food, clean water, shelter, local clinics, information and freedom.
As a result of this craze for so-called development, environmental protection has taken a back seat. The problem is that the people who are responsible for much of the destruction of the environment are precisely those who should be providing leadership in environmental protection campaigns. But they are not doing so.
Also, political power now is wielded by those who have business interests and close links with multinational corporations (MNCs). The only aim of these MNCs is to make profit at the expense of the environment and people.
We also know that many world political leaders are persuaded by MNCs not to pay attention to declarations made in international environmental conferences. I strongly believe that as citizens we should refuse to be at the mercy of these corporations. Corporations can be extremely merciless, as they have no human face..

You started your career as an academic. Later you became an environmentalist, and now you are called a pro-democracy activist. How would you describe your evolution in the last 25 years?
Few environmentalists today are worried about the welfare of bees, butterflies and trees alone. They know that it is not possible to keep the environment pure if you have a government that does not control polluting industries and deforestation.
In Kenya, for example, real estate developers have been allowed to go into the

A 20-million-tree green belt

In a country where women play a marginal role in political and social affairs, 59-year-old Wangari Muta Maathai's achievements stand out as an exception. A biologist, she was the first woman from East Africa to receive a doctorate, to become a professor and chair a department–all at the University of Nairobi.

Maathai began to be active in the National Council of Women of Kenya in 1976 and it was through the Council that she launched a tree-planting project called "Save the Land Harambee" (a Swahili word meaning let's all pull together). The project was renamed the Green Belt Movement (GBM) in 1977.

The GBM initiated programmes to promote and protect biodiversity, to protect the soil, to create jobs especially in rural areas, to give women a positive image in the community and to assert their leadership qualities.

The overall aim of the GBM has been to create public awareness of the need to protect the environment through tree planting and sustainable management. Nearly 80 per cent of the 20 million trees planted by the GBM have survived. At present the GBM has over 3,000 nurseries, giving job opportunities to about 80,000 people, most of them rural women.

In 1986 the GBM established a Pan-African Green Belt Network and has organized workshops and training programmes on environmental awareness for scores of individuals from other African countries. This has led to the adoption of Green Belt methods in Tanzania, Uganda, Malawi, Lesotho, Ethiopia, and Zimbabwe.

Maathai, who is a member of the UN Secretary General's Advisory Board on Disarmament, has won 14 international awards, including the prestigious Right Livelihood Award. She won the award, presented by a Swedish foundation and often referred to as an Alternative Nobel Prize, in recognition of her "contributions to the well-being of humankind".

In a country where single-party rule prevailed for decades, Maathai has been teargassed and severely beaten by police during demonstrations to protect Kenya's forests.

"The government thinks that by threatening me and bashing me they can silence me," says Maathai. "But I have an elephant's skin. And somebody must raise their voice."

Maathai, a mother of three children, is currently involved in a struggle to save the 2,500-acre Karura forests, northwest of Nairobi, where the government wants to build housing complexes.

middle of indigenous forests and build expensive houses. As concerned individuals we should oppose that. When you start intervening at that level, you find yourself in direct confrontation with policy-makers and you start to be called an activist.

I was teaching at the University of Nairobi in the 1970s, when I felt that the academic rights of women professors were not being respected because they were women. I became an activist at the university, insisting that I wanted my rights as an academic.

Meanwhile, I found myself confronted by other issues that were directly related to my work but were not clear to me at the outset, like human rights. This directly led me to another area, governance. As a result I was drafted into the pro-democracy campaign.

I realized in the 1970s that in a young democracy like ours it was very easy for leaders to become dictators. As this happened they started using national resources as though they were their personal property. I realized that the constitution had given them powers to misuse official machinery. So I became involved in the pro-democracy movement and pressed for constitutional reforms and political space to ensure freedom of thought and expression. We cannot live with a political system that kills creativity and produces cowardly people.

With your academic qualifications you could have lived a comfortable life in the U.S. or elsewhere in the West. But you decided to come back and settle down in Kenya. In the last 25 years, you have been verbally abused, threatened, beaten, put behind bars and on many occasions forbidden to leave the country. Have you ever regretted returning to Kenya and becoming an activist?

I did not deliberately decide to become an activist, but I have never regretted the fact that I decided to stay here and to contribute to the development of this country and my region. I know that I have made a little difference.

Many people come up to me and tell me that my work has inspired them. This gives me great satisfaction because in the earlier days, especially during the dictatorship, it was difficult to speak.

Until a few years ago, people used to come up to me in the street and whisper "I am with you and I am praying for you." They were so scared of being identified with me that they did not want to be heard. I know a lot of people were afraid of talking to me and being seen with me because they might be punished.

I have been a greater positive force by staying here and going through trials and tribulations than if I had gone to other countries. It would have been very different to live in the West and say my country should do this and that. By being here I encourage many more people.

Do you think you were subjected to virulent attacks and abuses because you questioned men's decisions?

Our men think African women should be dependent and submissive, definitely not better than their husbands. There is no doubt that at first many people opposed me because I am a woman and resented the idea that I had strong opinions.

I know that at times men in positions of influence, including President Daniel Arap Moi, ridiculed me. At one time Members of Parliament accused me and ridiculed me for being a divorced woman. I have felt that deep inside they were hoping that by calling into question my womanhood I would be subdued. Later they realized they were wrong.

In 1989, for example, we had a big confrontation with the authorities when we were fighting to save Uhuru Park in Nairobi. I argued that it would be ridiculous to destroy this beautiful park in the centre of the city and replace it with a multi-storeyed complex.

Uhuru Park was the only place in Nairobi where people could spend time with their families outdoors. The park was a wonderful place for people to go because it was a place where no one bothered them.

When I launched the campaign opposing the construction of the "Parkmonster", as the project later came to be known, I was ridiculed and accused of not understanding development. I didn't study development but I do know that you need space in a city. Fortunately other non-governmental organizations and thousands of ordinary people joined our protests and finally the park was saved.

The government, which wanted to destroy that park, has since declared it a national heritage. That's wonderful. They could have done that without fighting and without ridiculing me.

In Madagascar, a woman plants rice in the ashes of a felled area of forest, home to the last survivors of a lemur species.

What made you stand in the presidential elections in 1997? Despite your popularity, why didn't you win a sizeable number of votes?
I decided to stand for election for several reasons. In 1992, when a multi-party system was legalized in Kenya for the first time, I tried very hard with other political groups to unite the opposition, but in vain. When there were many opposition candidates running for the presidency, I withdrew from the campaign.
As expected, the opposition lost those elections and everybody now accepts that the campaign we launched for them to unite was right. We wanted to form a government of national unity within the opposition in 1992. This is exactly what they are now clamouring for.
In the 1997 general elections, my idea was to persuade the opposition to unite and field a strong candidate from one ethnic community against the ruling Kenya African National Union (KANU).1 But I was called a tribalist by some opposition groups for proposing that idea. When all my efforts to unite the opposition failed, I decided to run for president.
But during the campaign I also came to realize that in this country it is very difficult to get elected without money. I didn't have money. I realized that it doesn't matter how good you are, how honest you are and how pro-democratic you are, if you don't have money to give to the voter you won't get elected. So I lost.
All this gave me a new experience. Now I can speak as an insider. I also realized that people here are not yet ready for democracy and we need a lot of civic education and political consciousness. People here are still controlled by ethnicity and vote along ethnic lines. The ethnic question became a very important issue during the last elections..

Despite having enormous natural resources Africa still lags behind other continents in terms of development and growth. Why is this?
Poor leadership, without any doubt. This generation of African leaders will go down in history as a very irresponsible one that has brought Africa to its knees. During the past three decades, Africa has suffered from a lack of visionary and altruistic leaders committed to the welfare of their people.
There are historical reasons for this. Just before independence was granted to many African countries, young Africans were promoted by colonial rulers to positions until then unoccupied by the local people and were trained to take over power from the colonial administration.
The new black administrators and burgeoning elites enjoyed the same economic and social life-styles and privileges that the imperial administrators enjoyed. The only difference between the two in terms of the objectives for the country was the colour of their skin.
In the process, the African leaders abandoned their people, and in order to maintain their hold on power they did exactly what the colonial system was doing, namely to pit one community against another. This internal conflict continued for decades in many African countries, draining their scarce resources.
So what we need is to improve our leadership. If we don't there is no hope, because history teaches us that if you cannot protect what is your own somebody will come and take it. If our people cannot protect themselves they will continue to be exploited. Their resources will continue to be exploited.
It is also true that Western powers, especially the former colonial masters of this region, have continued to exploit Africa and have continued to work very closely with these dictators and irresponsible leaders. That is why we are now deep in debt, which we cannot repay.
Africa also needs assistance from international governments to improve its economic standing. For example, most foreign aid to Africa comes in the form of curative social welfare programmes such as famine relief, food aid, population control programmes, refugee camps, peace-keeping forces and humanitarian missions.
At the same time, hardly any resources are available for sustainable human development programmes such as functional education and training, development of infrastructure, food production and promotion of entrepreneurship. There are no funds for the development of cultural and social programmes which would empower people and release their creative energy.
I am hoping that in the new millennium a new leadership will emerge in Africa, and I hope this new leadership will show more concern for the people and utilize the continent's resources to help Africans get out of poverty

Madagascar, the fourth largest island in the world, famous for its unusual biodiversity, may soon be known as a modern-day example of the Tragedy of the Commons. Both people and wildlife are struggling to survive as natural resources dwindle, and little time remains for the island to be salvaged from ecological disaster.

MADAGASCAR : BALANCING ACT

© Anisa Abid

The Indri, largest lemur in Madagascar, is an endangered species.

Since Madagascar completed its separation from the mainland about 60 million years ago, this territory approximately the size of France has developed unique flora and fauna. The lemur, a small primate, is the most typical example of Madagascar's unparalleled levels of endemism.

Although there are a greater number of species in general in mainland Africa, the island holds more endemic species and taxa. For example, you can find seven of the eight existing Baobab trees in Madagascar, and only one in all of Africa. Of the 101 native terrestrial species recorded on the island, nearly all are endemic. This is why Madagascar is considered one of the most significant biodiversity '"hotspots" and among the top six of the world's 18 mega-diversity countries.

Sadly, large numbers of unusual animals and plants have been disappearing since the arrival of man, only 1,500 years ago. Already one-fifth of all known lemur species have gone extinct. The International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources Red List (2007), cites 355 species of animals and 281 of plants as threatened with extinction in Madagascar, while much about the country's biodiversity remains unknown. New discoveries are still being made, such as the two new species of Mouse Lemurs identified in the northeastern Makira region.

Multiple threats

LSpecies are endangered for a variety of reasons. Habitat loss due to deforestation is the overarching threat for the majestic Madagascar Fish-Eagle, for instance. Economic pressures – people vying for food and other resources – are behind the problem, as in the case of fish populations being exhausted by over-fishing. From 1980 to 2005 the quantity of fish caught skyrocketed from 53 to 8,500 tons. Several turtle species are critically endangered because of the exotic pet trade, and Ploughshare Tortoises are now down to about 600 remaining in the wild, according to the British NGO Durrell. Other animals are the victims of cultural superstitions, like the harmless, nocturnal Aye-Aye lemur, routinely killed because it is considered to be a portent of evil.

Climate change is an additional threat that looms over wildlife populations, according to studies. One study (Dunham, Biological Conservation) on the endangered Milne Edwards Sifaka lemur found that a 50% population decline within three generations was very likely, and that the effects of changing global cycles, like El Nino Southern Oscillations, may pose a further threat. Fecundity of lemurs was over

© Anisa Abid

The Brookesia minima is a small chameleon from Madagascar, no bigger than 3 cm. It is on the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List.

65% lower in El Nino years, it was found. Patricia Wright has done similar research on climate change impact, such as a potential decline in species populations from altered distributions of annual rainfall and altered ecosystems that leave the island vulnerable to change.

Developing solutions

For Madagascar to escape what scientists term the "sixth great extinction", the Malagasy must find the right formula for balancing conservation and growth. The population – estimated at 18 million and expected to double by 2025 – is turning to its environment for sustenance and profit.

Rice paddies are taking the place of forests, and already this has led to the extinction of species, including the elephant bird and pygmy hippopotamus. ""If the same speed of current deforestation continues, within the next 25 years there [will be] no forest left in Madagascar," asserts Jonah Ratsimbazafy, a Malagasy primatologist who works with the Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust. Since 2003, however, when Madagascar's President Marc Ravalomanana promised to triple the surface of protected areas, a decrease in the annual rate of forest destruction has already been reported (Conservation International), from 0.8% in the 1990s to 0.1% today.

© Michel Ravassard/UNESCO

There are about 130 chameleon species in Madagascar, half of them endemic.

Many organizations such as Conservation International, the World Wildlife Fund, Durrell and Mitsinjo (a local NGO based in Andosibe) are hard at work to avert disaster, and are also involving local populations. Durrell, for instance, has signed an agreement whereby inhabitants pledge to safeguard the forest in exchange for the construction of infrastructure and schools. While preserving natural resources remains a priority, NGOs are cooperating with the locals to include their needs for improving quality of life. Eco-tourism provides jobs and though not without impact on the environment, it can, if managed properly, offer sustainable economic benefits.

Environmental issues remain a subject of discord, a fact taken into consideration by the government when making decisions regarding natural resource usage. Ranamofana National Park is an example of a protected area seen as a triumph amongst conservationists, but an economic disaster for locals. The rainforest is accessible for ecotourism purposes only, which is resented by the locals as they are forbidden to use the park's natural resources. Walking inside the park, one is thankful to see elusive creatures like the critically endangered Golden Bamboo Lemur in its natural habitat. Once outside the park, however, one easily feels sorrow for the people living in dire poverty.

To preserve Madagascar's culture and natural beauty, there must be a development plan that takes both people and wildlife into consideration. The people and wild places of Madagascar are so enchanting, losing them forever would be a tragedy. The island's biodiversity crisis, moreover, should set off alarms for the rest of the world to maintain vigilance over other ecosystems. Our collective survival is at stake.

Anisa Abid,
American journalist

Why wildlife matters

THE COURRIER, 1988

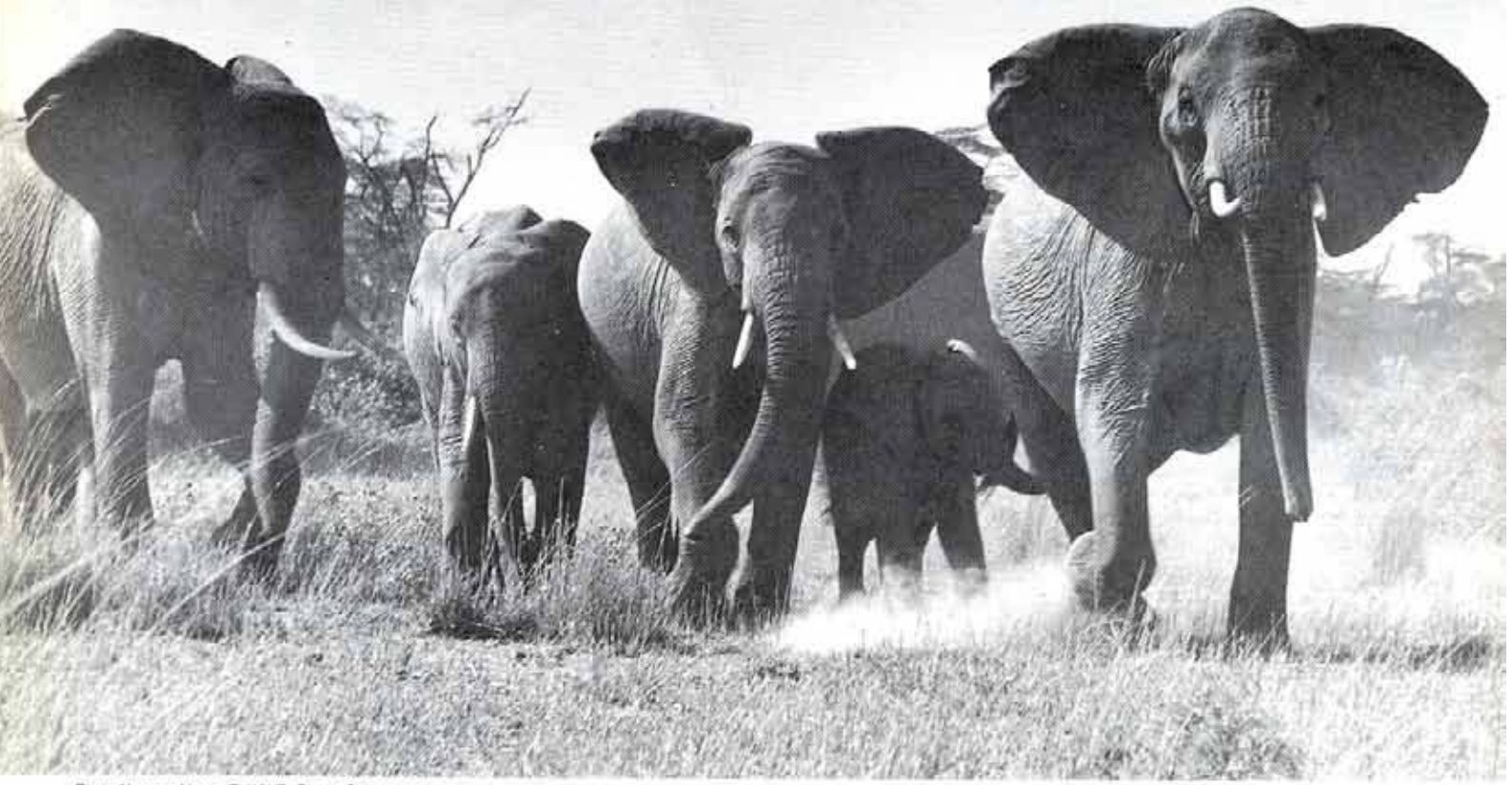


Photo Norman Myers © WWF, Gland, Switzerland

▲ **"If all the beasts were gone, men would die from great loneliness of spirit, for whatever happens to the beasts also happens to the man. All things are connected. Whatever befalls the earth befalls the sons of the earth." These words were written by an Indian chief, Seathl, in a letter to the President of the United States in 1855. Above, a herd of African elephants. Poaching for ivory is a serious threat wherever elephants are accessible, and in Africa elephant numbers have declined considerably in recent years.**

IN this age of technology, of computers, television, supersonic aircraft and nuclear power stations, why should wild animals and plants matter to us any longer? Surely they must now go into the ash-can of history, along with bows and arrows, wood fires and horse transport?

On the contrary, it is a matter of life and death, in every sense of the phrase, that animals and plants should continue to exist. For every day of our lives, every man, woman and child in the world depends on them for vital parts of their welfare.

Animals and plants contribute to human welfare in three main ways. They provide much of the material basis of human life: almost all our food, much of our clothing, and in many parts of the world still most of the material for building and of the fuel for heating and lighting our dwellings. In addition, they provide the knowledge that is essential for maintaining this material basis, and indeed for preventing a widespread return to more primitive conditions. Not least, they contribute significantly to our enjoyment of our environment, both in our daily recreation and in our wonderment at both the beauty of the natural world and at the mysteries of the universe.

It was recognition of the importance to mankind of the genetic resources represented by animal and plant species, both

by Richard Fitter

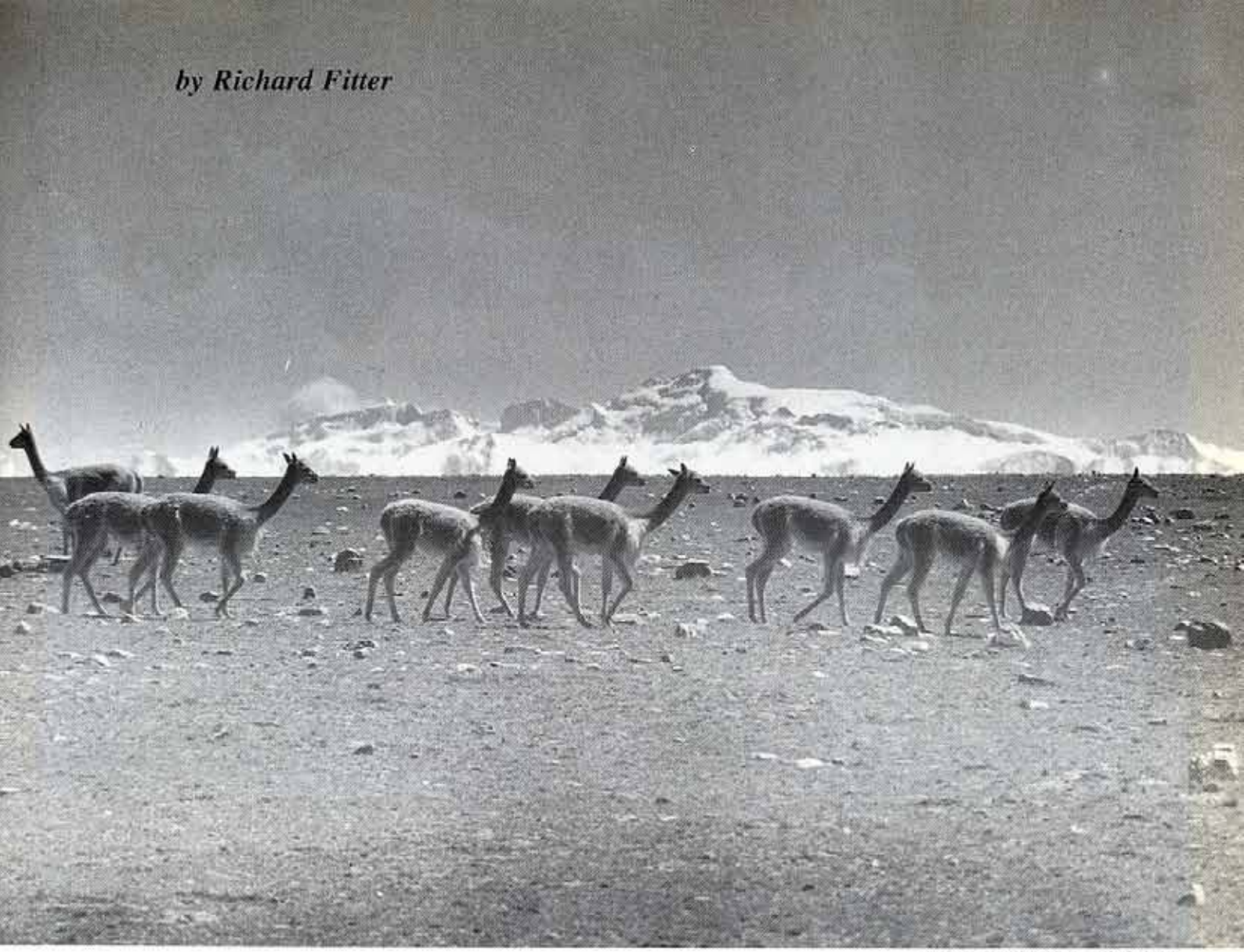


Photo J. Esser © WWF, Gland, Switzerland

▲
The vicuña (*Lama vicugna*), a ruminant related to the llama, lives in the high Andes. Its exceptionally fine and warm wool was highly prized in North America and Europe, and so many vicuña were slaughtered that the species was threatened with extinction until Peru took protective measures to save it in the 1960s.

wild and domesticated, and alarm at their widespread destruction, that eight years ago led the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) to produce the World Conservation Strategy (see the *Unesco Courier*, May 1980). This has three primary objectives:

(1) to maintain viable stocks of all animal and plant species (it must be *all* because we still know so little about the value of the great majority of species; it is only quite recently, for instance, that the value in the treatment of cancer of a little-known Madagascar plant, the periwinkle *Catharanthus*, was discovered);

(2) to maintain large enough stocks of species already known to be of value to man, so that they can be cropped, harvested or otherwise enjoyed indefinitely; and

(3) to maintain pure air and water and fertile soil.

Though all three aims of the World Conservation Strategy are plain common sense, they are widely disregarded by both governments and individuals, thanks to our present social and institutional arrangements. How are we to overcome this widespread neglect and manage the world's animals and plants, both wild and domesticated, on a sustainable basis, i.e. so that they continue to be available for our benefit?

The two main threats to species, which have led to the extinction of some and severe reductions in the numbers of many others, are overexploitation and habitat destruction.

Historically, overexploitation, both legal and illegal, has been the more important. In the last century, overhunting exterminated the passenger pigeon in North America and nearly exterminated the bison there too. In the present century, systematic poaching for their horns and ivory has almost exterminated the black rhinoceros and severely reduced elephant numbers in Africa.

Moreover, overhunting of the great whales, especially in the southern oceans, despite the efforts of the International Whaling Commission (IWC) set up especially to prevent this, has reduced almost all stocks throughout the world to the level of commercial extinction. Since their hunting is now forbidden, the whaling industry has in effect committed suicide. Marine fish stocks throughout the world have also been steadily overexploited so that many of them are no longer available for human consumption. The world's last great reservoir of plentiful fish stocks is now in the Antarctic and sub-Antarctic. Will current efforts through the Antarctic Treaty be too little and too late to save these too?

But today widespread habitat destruction is by far the most serious threat to both animal and plant species, especially in the great rainforest belt of the developing world. Here the burgeoning human population makes constantly increasing demands for timber and cultivable land. "More people and less swamp", as an elderly Floridan pithily explained the decrease of the cougar in his district. Ten hectares of virgin tropical forest are estimated to be disappearing every minute. At this rate of clearance hardly any of the surviving 2 to 3 billion hectares will remain outside national parks and other protected areas by the end of the century, now only a dozen years away.

Pollution is an almost equally important factor. Chemical wastes from both industry and agriculture, as well as from the activities of individuals such as automobile travel, are steadily impairing the quality of

Photo Pierre Letellier © Jacana, Paris

▲ **The African northern white rhino (*Ceratotherium simum cottoni*) lives under threat of extinction because of hunting for its horn. By the early 1980s it was estimated that its numbers had been reduced to fewer than 700 animals. The biggest population of northern white rhinos today live in Zaire's 500,000-hectare Garamba National Park, which in 1980 was included on Unesco's World Heritage List as a natural property of outstanding universal value.**

The Arabian oryx (*Oryx leucoryx*) was once common throughout the desert areas of Arabia, Syria and Mesopotamia. By 1972 it had become extinct in the wild through intensive hunting. Fortunately, before that happened, a few had been captured and used to build up breeding herds. In 1980 the oryx was successfully reintroduced in Oman. ▼

Photo H. Jungius © WWF, Gland, Switzerland

air, soil and water. The most dramatic effect is that of acid rain, due to a "chemical soup" still not fully understood, which is destroying both forests and freshwater fish stocks throughout the northern hemisphere.

To stop overexploitation, we must regulate cropping and harvesting. This calls for both licensing of individual hunters, sometimes with specific bag limits, and quotas for commercial harvesting. The problem is always enforcement, as witness the universal existence and increasing audacity of poachers even in national parks, and the dismal record of the whaling industry.

The accurate estimation of stock size is another problem. The IWC has its own scientific committee to do this for whales, and IUCN has set up a Conservation Monitoring Centre (CMC), to create an accurate data-base for all species. The Centre is also responsible for the Red Data Books, brainchild of Sir Peter Scott, which summarize key information about endangered species.

So far the chief weapon against habitat destruction has been the creation of national parks, nature reserves, wildlife refuges or other protected areas. But can enough land be set aside in this way in the next ten or twelve years to save the many thousands of species that today face certain extinction from rainforest loss alone? The number of species so threatened may indeed be millions, if the latest estimates of the world's invertebrate species—an incredible 30 million—are correct.

The two bodies which bear the brunt of the responsibility for saving species are IUCN and WWF. They share a headquarters in Switzerland and are greatly helped by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), which strongly supports and grant-aids IUCN. Birds are covered by the International Council for Bird Preservation (ICBP), headquartered in the United Kingdom and currently grant-aided by WWF.

IUCN operates through six commissions of scientific experts: the Species Survival Commission (SSC), the one mainly concerned with species conservation, works through a network of more than 90 specialist groups, to which nearly 2,000 zoologists and botanists all over the world voluntarily contribute their expertise. Among the most active groups are those covering African elephants and rhinos, antelopes, cats, primates, crocodiles, marine turtles, dragonflies and orchids. The Trade Group is responsible for IUCN's input into the important Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). The SSC also has close links with ICBP, which has its own series of working groups, such as those for parrots, flamingos and bustards.

Two other relevant IUCN commissions are those for Ecology (general habitat problems, pollution) and National Parks and Protected Areas. Unesco's Man and the Biosphere Programme also plays a vital part in preserving habitat for species, as do such international conventions as the World Heritage Convention, and the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance.

Many non-governmental organizations belong to IUCN, and some are active in the species conservation field in their own right, notably the Bombay Natural History Society, the Fauna and Flora Preservation

Society of London, the Frankfurt Zoological Society of the Federal Republic of Germany and the New York Zoological Society.

Unlike IUCN, WWF and ICBP operate largely through national organizations or sections, ICBP's network being considerably the more extensive world-wide. WWF is primarily a fund-raising body, and increasingly tends to raise funds for its own programmes and projects.

So where do we go from here? How can this array of national and international bodies help to achieve our aim, the conservation and sustainable use (which includes non-consumptive uses, such as bird-watching and whale-watching) of animal and plant species?

More, and usually a lot more, of what we are already doing seems to be the answer. First we must set aside and manage properly adequate areas of habitat. This includes ensuring that big development projects take account of the need to conserve genetic resources.

We must also ensure that all wild populations that are harvested are not over-harvested. This means both cracking down on poaching everywhere, not just in protected areas, and properly enforcing the CITES trade regulations. Finally, and most important of all, we must carry with us not only the decision-makers, politicians and administrators, but also villagers and townsfolk all over the world. Without their goodwill, and their realization of where their own real long-term interests lie, everything will be lost. ■

RICHARD FITTER, *British naturalist and author, has been a member of the Species Survival Commission of the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) for 24 years and is currently chairman of its Steering Committee. His 29th book was* Wildlife for Man, *a source-book on species conservation for the World Conservation Strategy, and his 30th, a field guide to the north-west European countryside in winter, will appear in September 1988.*

Illicit trade in threatened species

THE international wildlife trade, worth billions of dollars annually, has been responsible for massive declines in the numbers of many species of animals and plants. The scale of over-exploitation for trade aroused such concern that an international treaty was drawn up in 1973 to protect wildlife against such over-exploitation and to prevent international trade from threatening species with extinction.

Known as CITES, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora entered into force on 1 July 1975 and now has 96 member countries. Enforcement of CITES is the responsibility of these countries, which are required to ban commercial trade in an agreed list of currently endangered species and regulate and monitor trade in others that might become endangered. Governments are also required to submit reports, including trade records, to the CITES Secretariat in Switzerland.

The wildlife trade involves a wide variety of species, both as live specimens and as products. Millions of live animals and plants are shipped around the world each year to supply the pet trade and to meet the demand for ornamental plants. Furskins, leather, ivory and articles manufactured from these materials are all traded in large quantities.

CITES provides protection for species in two main categories, "most endangered species", and "other species at serious risk". Among those listed in the former category are all apes, lemurs, the giant panda, many South American monkeys, great whales, cheetah, leopards, tigers, Asian elephants, all rhinoceroses, many birds of prey, cranes, pheasants and parrots, all sea turtles, some crocodiles and lizards, and giant salamanders.

Included in the second category are species which might become endangered if trade in them is not controlled and monitored. International trade in these species is permitted with proper documentation issued by the government of the exporting country. The list includes all animal species in the following groups which are not already in the first category: primates, cats, otters, whales, dolphins and porpoises, birds of prey, tortoises, and crocodiles, as well as many other species such as the African elephant, fur seals and birds of paradise.

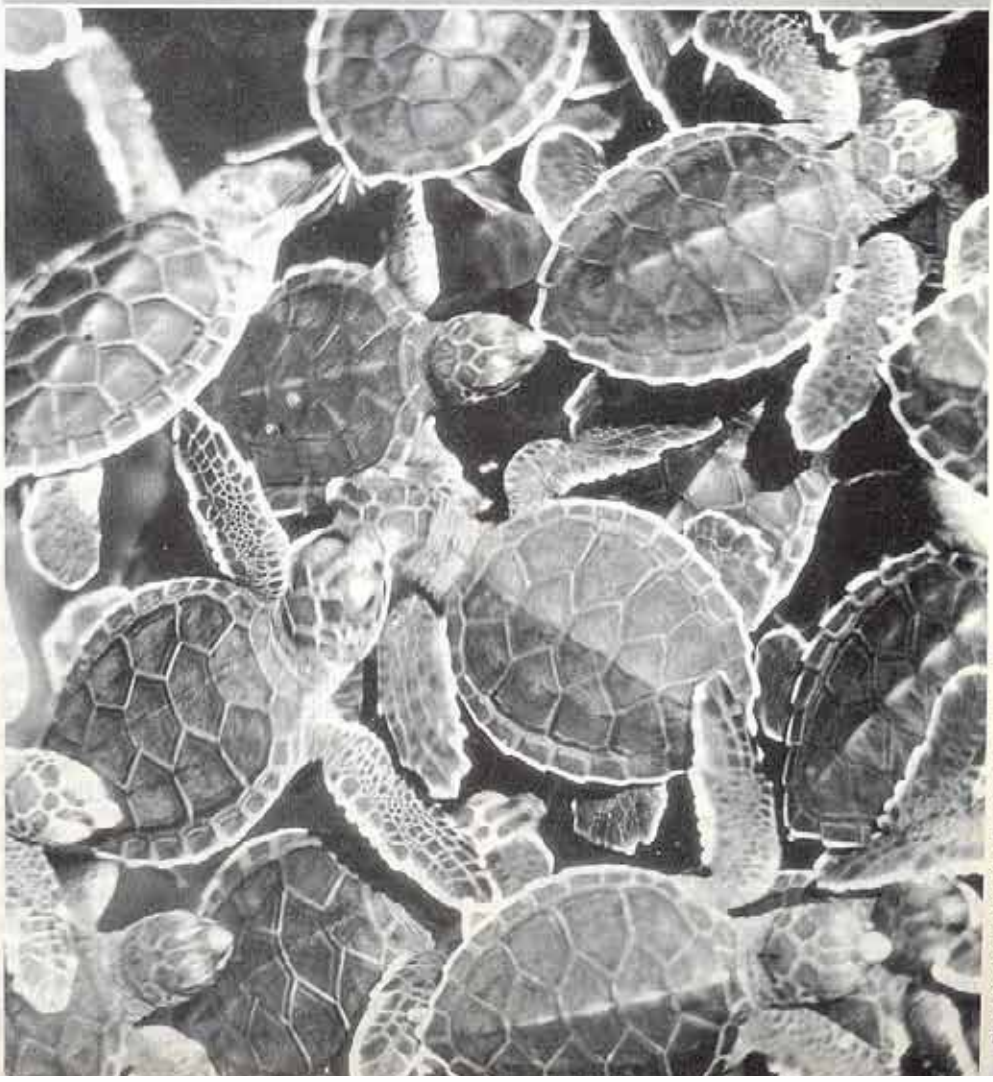


Photo Russ Kinne © Photo Researchers Inc., New York

The green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*), found in ▶ tropical seas, is overexploited for its meat, its eggs and its shell, used to make tourist souvenirs. Turtle populations have been severely reduced and in some regions have disappeared completely. Right, baby green turtles.

1948: the American anthropologist, Ruth Benedict, emphasises the role of culture in education and international cooperation. 2008: the French anthropologist, Cécile Duvelle, takes stock - the idea has filtered into our thinking, but is still struggling to be turned into practice.

CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND EDUCATION: WHAT HAS CHANGED SINCE 60 YEARS AGO?

© Julien Lanthier

The geometrical design tradition (kusiwa) perpetuated by the Wajapi people in Brazil was proclaimed a masterpiece of humanity by UNESCO.

In 1948, the American social anthropologist, Ruth Benedict, published her article Cultural Continuity in [a] Civilized World, in one of the first issues of the UNESCO Courier. I read it with mixed feelings.

On the one hand it was disconcerting to be reading a message that seemed so relevant today, while, 60 years on, UNESCO seems to have made only quite modest progress. I felt a certain enthusiasm, too, for the rightness of her thinking, and the impression that UNESCO, in its long career, has never really departed from its primary objective.

Ruth Benedict's observation seems self-evident: culture is a learning process. "The cultural patterns which men in all societies invent for themselves and transmit down the generations have in each community a considerable degree of consistency within themselves […] and have to be taught anew to each generation," she wrote, before adding that recognition of "cultural differences" – a term that, a few decades later was replaced by 'cultural diversity' – "can promote international co-operation" and cannot be blamed for "the chaos of the world", as some would have us believe, even today.

And, she concluded, "if we are to accept the different ideals and alternative social arrangements of the nations of the world, those of us who are professionally concerned with childhood education have a task which extends far beyond problems of curriculum revision. We need the clear-sightedness and the tolerance which will help us to appreciate the different kinds of strengths which different nations could contribute to the world in which we desire to live."

Sixty years later, have we succeeded in guaranteeing a quality education for all, which respects cultural diversity and serves as a lever for sustainable development, conceived and promoted by the people themselves?

Education as a vector for cultural transmission

It is widely accepted today that a quality education is, above all, one that can respond to local learning needs. Experts also agree that literacy is most successful when acquired in the mother tongue.

But in many countries – especially the former colonies – formal education systems are still struggling to become vectors for cultural transmission at the service of social development. Similarly, a number of "development failures" can undoubtedly be explained by a failure to take account of the cultural dimension of development, alongside its economic, social and environmental aspects.

Even so, the critical and emancipating potential inherent in any educational process remains unchanged, despite what some detractors of "culturally adapted" education might think. As Ruth Benedict so rightly pointed out, the transmission of culture from generation to generation enables it continually to evolve and recreate itself. "No matter how

©UNESCO/O.Pasquiers

Culture is transmitted from one generation to the next through education.

distinctively French France seems over several centuries, or how Dutch Holland seems, with each new generation, the personnel of France and Holland changes completely. One generation dies and another is born […] emotions are selected and cultivated in them which fit them to be members of their own community and nation".

When African heads of State met in Khartoum in January 2006 for the sixth African Union Summit, they came to much the same conclusion. Convinced that "cultural values and heritages should provide the basis for education at all levels," they recognised "the importance of African languages as media of instruction and vehicles of culture," emphasizing the "indisputable interface between culture and education and the role of both culture and education in sustainable socio-economic development."

Finally, they urged their governments "to create the fora for regular consultations and streamlining culture in education and education in culture, in particular through the rebuilding of African educational systems." This should be music to Ruth Benedict's ears in her final resting place …

Culture: both source and estuary

For the first time in 2001, UNESCO recognized cultural diversity as the "common heritage of humanity".

UNESCO's adoption in 2003 of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage would also be dear to her, as it is another step towards this recognition of the unbreakable bond between culture and education, and raises many hopes. Far from aiming to keep moribund cultural heritage alive as a museum piece, this Convention enables peoples to perpetuate a heritage conveying values and meaning, by permanently recreating it, providing them with a sense of identity and continuity.

It is true that many elements of intangible cultural heritage are endangered today. All too often they are assimilated to unnecessary or obsolete traditions, with no part in the development of the nation and, within the processes of globalisation, they are of no interest to young people, whose attention is legitimately turned outwards, towards the world. It is clear that current educational systems must carry some of the responsibility for this attitude of the younger generations.

The 2003 Convention provides an opportunity for educational systems not only to open themselves to cultural diversity on a national level, but also to discover and appreciate the extraordinary wealth of intangible cultural heritage in the world as a whole. It insists on "the need to build greater awareness, especially among the younger generations, of the importance of the intangible cultural heritage and of its safeguarding," as a factor for bringing human beings closer together, for exchange and greater understanding. In other words, it can contribute to silencing the archaic but tenacious thesis of the clash of civilisations.

By inviting States to raise awareness of young people regarding the values of their cultural heritage, notably through education, it is as if this Convention came about to put things back in their place. It reminds us that culture is both the source and the estuary of all development processes, with education its preferred vector of transmission. This reminder comes at the right time, and, we hope, will ensure that the diversity of cultures is not relegated to the archives of memory, but remains a living reality, full of meaning and creativity for the future of humanity as a whole.

© UNESCO/Philippe Bordas

The Sosso-Bala cultural space (Guinea), proclaimed a masterpiece of humanity by UNESCO.

Cécile Duvelle,
head of UNESCO's
Intangible Heritage section

IMPROVEMENT OF TEXTBOOKS SOUGHT IN MEMBER STATES

THE teaching of history depends largely upon the textbooks used in the schools; and upon that teaching rests, to a large degree, our conception as to the character of nations and national policies." This statement was written in 1917 by James T. Shotwell, a noted American historian and [illegible] shapers of attitudes, it still contains much truth to-day. However, not only history textbooks, but also geography, literature, language, science, mathematics and other textbooks and teaching materials affect the understanding and attitudes of youth concerning other nations, peace and war.

THE COURIER, 1948

Understandings and attitudes formed in childhood persist into adulthood, and the opinions and attitudes of most literate adults have been conditioned by the textbooks and teaching materials they studied in school.

This fact was recognized by the First Session of the General Conference of Unesco when it approved a nine point programme for the improvement of textbooks and teaching materials as aids in developing international understanding. This programme was continued by the Second Session of the General Conference meeting in Mexico City in 1947, and the Secretariat of Unesco is in the process of putting in into effect.

Enquiry Sent To Member States

The first step in the improvement of textbooks and teaching materials as aids to peace is to discover what has already been done and what is being done to achieve this end. Consequently, the Secretariat has been assembling and studying the materials on textbook improvement produced in various parts of the world.

An enquiry has been sent to Member States to discover what is being done at the present time and what is planned for the future. In addition to informational material, lists are being prepared of individuals and groups interested in the improvement of textbooks and teaching materials. These resources will enable Unesco to serve as a clearing house in this field.

Another aspect of Unesco's programme is the preparation of principles and criteria and a model plan for the analysis and improvement of textbooks and teaching materials. The model plan, including the principles and criteria, is now in draft form and will be submitted to Member States in the near future. It will be accompanied by a recommendation that Member States study the treatment of agencies of international co-operation in their own textbooks. At a later time these reports will be studied at Unesco House and a summary report will be prepared.

Handbook Planned On Improved Textbooks

The Unesco Secretariat is also seeking to extend bilateral and regional agreements and enterprises. Information on such agreements and enterprises is being assembled and studied and recommendations for future action will be made on the basis of past experience.

The Secretariat plans to bring together its findings and recommendations to form a handbook for the improvement of textbooks and teaching materials. A preliminary summary of past achievements in textbook improvement was prepared and mimeographed [illegible] 46 under title Looking at the World through Textbooks. This report was revised in 1947 and published in French by the Services Français d'Information under the title Les livres de classe et la découverte du monde.

Unesco is not working on all aspects of the improvement of textbooks and teaching materials but is restricting its activities to their improvement as aids to international understanding and peace. Its aim is to report on what has been and is being done, to make recommendations, to provide limited assistance on request, and, above all, to provide an opportunity for those interested in the improvement of textbooks and teaching materials in various parts of the world to work together in a common cause.

Truth and justice in the content of textbooks and teaching materials will contribute to a more wholesome and effective local and national citizenship as well as to the development of the understandings, attitudes, and skills necessary to world citizenship and to peace.

[illegible] On The Improvement of Textbooks and Teaching Materials in the Unesco Department of Education.

Dr. Quillen is serving on the Unesco Secretariat while on leave from Stanford University where he is a professor of education. In the United States he has participated extensively in efforts to improve textbooks and develop international understanding. Among the recent publications of which he is author or co-author are: Textbook Improvement and International Understanding, written for the U.S. National Commission for Unesco and the American Council on Education; Living in our Communities: and Charting Intercultural Education, 1945-55.

NewZealand Offers Fellowships

The New Zealand Government has set aside a sum of £15,000 to finance a fellowship scheme to provide study opportunities in New Zealand for an initial group of five Far Eastern students.

The first grants being made available include two in China and one each to the Philippines, Malay and Burma.

In approving the scheme, the New Zealand Minister of Education declared that the needs of these Far Eastern countries "for the kinds of training and experience available in New Zealand are more urgent than those of the war-devastated countries of Europe". It was pointed out, however, that the programme will be extended to other Eastern countries and eventually to European nations.

The governments of the countries to which the fellowships are being offered are being informed about the facilities which New Zealand can offer. Final selection of the candidates will be made by the Fellowships Committee set up by the New Zealand National Commission for Unesco.

Fields of study suggested for the first five candidates include: agriculture, rural life and education, Maori education, education in the Island Territories, social services, mining, engineering, teacher training and the technical aspects of broadcasting.

At the conclusion of the fellowship, each student will be expected to return to his home country to put his training and experience to use in reconstruction work. The grants will be generally of six months' duration and will allow for £ 450 including travel expenses within New Zealand.

RUTH BENEDICT'S Last Message On...

CULTURAL CONTINUITY IN CIVILIZED WORLD

A Lecture Delivered At the Prague Seminar

[Ruth Benedict, world-renowned social anthropologist, was one of the participants at the Unesco-sponsored Seminar on Childhood Education, held in Podebrady, Czechoslovakia from July 21 to August 25. Shortly after her return to the United States, Ruth Benedict suddenly died on September 17th. Her books "Patterns of Culture" and "The Races of Mankind" have been read and discussed in many countries.

We publish below the partial text of one of the last talks by Ruth Benedict, delivered at the Podebrady Seminar this summer. Readers wishing to receive the full text of this stimulating lecture can do so by writing to the Education Department of Unesco for document Sem.III.Lec./10.]

WHEN Unesco drew up its programme of work it stressed the need for "an enquiry into the distinctive character of the various national cultures and ideals, with the aim of stimulating the sympathy and respect of nations for each other's ideals and aspirations and the appreciation of national problems. One focus of such an enquiry would be the study of ways by which the young are trained to become responsible participants in the national culture".

Unesco has in this statement of policy stated its belief that recognition of cultural differences among civilized nations can promote international co-operation. Usually, in most nations, the attitude has been quite different. Usually people who hope for world co-operation are the very ones who minimize fundamental differences among the nations; they emphasize the similarity of human virtues and motives, no matter what the differences in cultural practice and behaviour.

Those who oppose international co-operation, on the other hand, blame the chaos of the world on the presence of these differences between one nation and another. They stress that other nations must accept the virtues and practices with which they are familiar in their own culture before it will be possible to make a peaceful world. This is an attitude which is centuries old. It has not made for world peace.

Now Unesco proposes that social scientists should take the lead in promoting a new and different attitude, studying national differences even down into such fundamental things as the way we bring up our children.

Unesco is saying, in effect, that it is part of wisdom to recognize that human communities are not all alike, and is suggesting that we cultivate psychologically healthy attitudes also among the nations and that by greater study and understanding of national differences we could promote a more co-operative world.

The late Ruth Benedict

No Nation Can Live To Itself Alone

This programme of Unesco's is especially necessary in the world today. No nation any longer lives by itself alone. In the modern world it is absolutely necessary that each nation take some attitude about other modes of life than its own.

Any study of national differences is a study of comparative cultures. This is the special field of social anthropology, and it is necessary to stress a few of the principal conclusions which have been derived from such study.

The way of life among people, the virtues they exhibit and the aggressiveness they show is **learned** in their experience in that social order; it is not racial; it is not instinctive, in the sense that human beings everywhere are born with a set of instincts which account for their aggressions and their cruelties.

The cultural patterns which men in all societies invent for themselves and transmit down the generations have in each community a considerable degree of consistency within themselves. These patterns of learned behaviour have to be taught anew to each generation. No matter how distinctively French France seems over several centuries, or how Dutch Holland seems, with each new generation the personnel of France and Holland changes completely. One generation dies and another is born. In the way in which parents handle their babies, in the way in which older children treat younger children, in the way in which teachers reward and punish their pupils, emotions are selected and cultivated in them which fit them to be members of their own community and nation.

Cultural study of national differences is just beginning to be accepted. The members of this seminar have therefore an opportunity to contribute to the research which is necessary, and it is well to say a few words about methods of training for such work.

Comparative study of human culture was not possible before the development of certain climates of opinion, and no student of the subject can do excellent work who finds this climate of opinion personally distasteful.

Students of comparative cultures have usually been trained by acquainting them with a wide range of the diversities of possible social institutions which are traditional in various parts of the world and then sending them to fairly small simple communities very different from their own. These are often pre-literate tribes.

Because the social arrangements and motivations of these communities are entirely unfamiliar to the student, he has to observe and record every detail of their lives in order to understand them. The "cultural surprise" he experiences gives him an education in patterns of culture which it is hard to give in any other way.

Genetic Study of National Character

This Unesco seminar is devoted to the study of childhood education, and Dr. Chen's study group has as its subject "Childhood Education in Different Nations". In line with Unesco's programme, seminar members are interpreting their assignment, not merely as the child's school education, but as his home and community experiences as well, "the ways in which the young are trained to become responsible participants in their national culture".

It is hoped that some of the delegates to this seminar will be stimulated by the discussions here, to go back to their countries to record observations and interviews, and thus contribute to mutual knowledge among nations of the world.

Genetic study of different cultures is precisely the study of how each generation is conditioned "to become responsible participants", in the way of life which is traditional in the community into which it is born. The technical development of such study is possible today because of knowledge that has been acquired in several sister sciences, all of which are involved in such genetic studies: (a) the study of the physical maturation of the child; (b) medical studies in the field of psychosomatics; (c) psychiatry.

Training The Young As Responsible Participants In National Cultures

Aided by the development of these related sciences, the time is ripe for the study of the "ways in which the young are trained to become responsible participants in national cultures". It is only necessary to collect the observations and record the attitudes upon which understanding can be based.

Thus when all European nations have made systematic records of observations of child life and have gathered data from parents and from educators can adequate understanding be obtained of the ways in which children in different areas of Europe are fitted "to become responsible participants" in national life.

If we are to accept the different ideals and alternative social arrangements of the nations of the world, those of us who are professionally concerned with childhood education have a task which extends far beyond problems of curriculum revision. We need the clear-sightedness and the tolerance which will help us to appreciate the different kinds of strengths which different nations could contribute to the world in which we desire to live.

Western countries have pulled together multi-billion-dollar plans to save their banking systems from catastrophe. The same determination, says the 2009 Education for All Global Monitoring Report, Overcoming inequality: why governance matters, is needed to tackle failing education systems.

EDUCATION : THE OTHER GLOBAL EMERGENCY

© UNESCO/Sam Dhillon

ESamburu children near Maralal, (175 miles north of Nairobi, Kenya), thrive thanks to "Loipi" community learning centres.

These are "extraordinary times". In just a matter of weeks, several western countries have pulled together multi-billion dollar bailout packages for their ailing banking systems thus keeping the wheels of the global economy in motion. Without question, political leaders needed to act decisively and act now or risk catastrophic financial implications.

The same determination, says the 2009 Education for All Global Monitoring Report, Overcoming inequality: why governance matters, is now needed to tackle an equally serious and no less urgent development challenge – that of ensuring social justice, fairness and the right to educational opportunity for the world's most vulnerable population groups.

"When financial systems fail, the consequences are highly visible and governments act," UNESCO's Director General Koïchiro Maatsura has commented. Yet "…when education systems fail the consequences are… no less real. Unequal opportunities for education fuel poverty, hunger, and child mortality and reduce prospects for economic growth."

The extent of global inequality in educational opportunity should give policymakers pause for thought. While over a third of children in rich countries complete university, a much smaller share even completes primary education in much of sub-Saharan Africa (with just 5% reaching university level). One in three children in developing countries (193 million in total) reach primary school age suffering from malnutrition and impaired cognitive growth – a figure that rises to over 40% in parts of South Asia.

National disparities mirror global inequalities. In Peru and the Philippines, children in the poorest 20% of the population receive 5 years less education than their peers from the wealthiest families. But wealth is not the only marker for marginalization and disadvantage. Other deeply entrenched barriers result from geographical accessibility to schooling, gender, language and ethnicity. In Senegal, for example, children in urban areas are twice as likely to be in school as those living in rural areas.

The picture, of course, is not all bleak and this year's Global Monitoring Report highlights some impressive national and regional performances. Tanzania and Ethiopia have both reduced the number of children out of school by over 3 million. In a region marked by deep gender inequalities, Bangladesh now has as many girls as boys reaching secondary school. In Latin America, several countries are enrolling and keeping more children in schools through innovative cash transfer programmes for the poorest households, with payments made conditional on school attendance and health visits. Most remarkably, Mexico's Oportunidades programme, one of the countries largest education schemes, is now being pilot tested in the New York City school system.

Nevertheless, the overall figures speak for themselves. An estimated 75 million children of primary school age world wide are currently out of school with partial projections suggesting that at least 29 million children will still be missing out on their right to an education in 2015. A further 776 million adults, or 16% of the world's population, lack even basic literacy skills. Two-thirds of these are women.

Without concerted and sustained action, the international development target of universal primary education by 2015 will move even further out of reach.

UNESCO/José Gabriel Ruiz Lembo

Oportunidades is the prinicipal anti-poverty program of the Mexican government.

That is why the way in which education systems are managed, policies developed, and resources allocated is in the political spotlight. 'Good governance' has become a rallying call, with decentralisation, the devolution of authority to parents and schools, and choice and competition recurrent themes in policy debates.

More of the same will simply not do.

But according to the Global Monitoring Report, governance reforms all too often fail to tackle the inequalities that are holding back education for all.

Wide sweeping education reforms that give but a passing nod to local context, institutional capacity requirements and equity-related issues are not reaching the levels of impact desired. In fact the evidence shows that applying education blueprints uncritically from the north, a practice frequently encouraged by the development community, will not lead to long term improvements in areas such as education resource allocation, school management and teacher recruitment.

A perfect example relates to reforms surrounding the decentralization of national education systems in developing countries. In the 1990s, such reforms undoubtedly brought education planning closer to school communities around the world. However at a time when many countries were coping with a massive expansion in education provision, financial decentralisation left different regions with even less resources to fund learning resources, school maintenance and the teaching profession. And while central and local governments supported the idea of devolving authority and decision-making to parents, schools and communities, especially those lacking voice in the poorest communities, they did not back this drive with measures to facilitate real participation.

Neither have competition, and its corollary - choice, proved to be the antidote for the failings of public education systems as many expected. Even in the United States, where the private and civil society sectors have been contracted into the management of public school systems under various forms of public-private partnership, the gains to efficiency and education performance from the creation of charter schools, for example, have been uneven and remain inconclusive.

In this year's Global Monitoring Report, we especially take the aid community to task for its 'collective failure' to deliver on development commitments. Many country's aid disbursements to basic education have stagnated since 2004. While countries such as the Netherlands and the United Kingdom still allocate over 60% of their aid to basic education in low-income countries, France allocates only 12% of its total development assistance in this area and Germany just 7%. Multilateral aid frameworks for supporting Education for All, such as the EFA Fast Track Initiative, are also failing to meet expectations. Inadequate donor support means that countries with approved plans will face an FTI shortfall of US$2.2 billion by 2010.

The circumstances into which children are born, their gender, the wealth of their parents, their language or the colour of their skin should no longer define their educational opportunities and ending inequality's 'lottery by birth' is perhaps one the greatest global challenges of the 21st century. The challenge is one that concerns all nations, since in a globalized world poverty and suffering do not remain confined within borders, but spill over in the form of conflict for scarce resources, mass migration and environmental degradation.

The response to the financial crisis demonstrates what governments can accomplish when faced with "extraordinary times". But if they carry on failing to tackle deep and persistent inequalities in education, targets set by the international community will be missed – in some cases by spectacular margins. Most importantly, millions of children around the world will continue to be consigned to lives of poverty and diminished opportunity.

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North Westminster School, United Kingdom.

This article is taken from Education: roads closed, special issue of the Courier published for the launch of the 2009 ***Global Monitoring Report.***

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CMoroccan primary school pupils during an Arabic class, Tifelte (near Rabat).

EDUCATION IN THE ARAB STATES: COULD DO BETTER

School attendance in the Arab Region has progressed over the past decade but nearly six million children still do not have access to education in that region which is still marked by strong disparities

According to the 2009 Education for All Monitoring Report published by UNESCO last month, low enrolment remains a major problem in the region. In 2006, 5.7 million children were out of school, i.e. 2 million fewer than in 1999. Nearly one quarter of them wee in Iraq and Yemen.

Nonetheless, Yemen has achieved considerable progress regarding school enrolment which increased by 20% between 1999 and 2006. Similar increases have been achieved in Djibouti, Mauritania and Morocco. Over the same year, enrollment decreased significantly in Oman, where it dropped by 8%, and in the Palestinian Autonomous Territories with a decline of 22%.

The progressive decline of school atendance in higher grades also poses a problem. In 2006, enrolment in primary education was at 84%, but only at 59% in secondary education (i.e. a slow progression of 7% since 1999) and a mere 22% at the university level.

The greatest disparity however concerns gender. According to the UNESCO Raport, the region has made progress towards parity in both primary and secondary education. But in 2006, parity had only been reached in the United Arab Emirates, Jordan and Qatar. In Egypt, on the other hand, girls account 95% of out-of-school children. Girls make up a regional average of 61% of out-of-school children.

There are also considerabel disparities in investments. In 2006, Tunisia, for example, devoted 7.7% of its GDP to education, while the figure for the United Arab Emirates is of 1.6%.

The Arab States devote a larger proportion of their overall public expenditure to education than other regions and this has enabled them to raise school attendance ratios and prolong education.

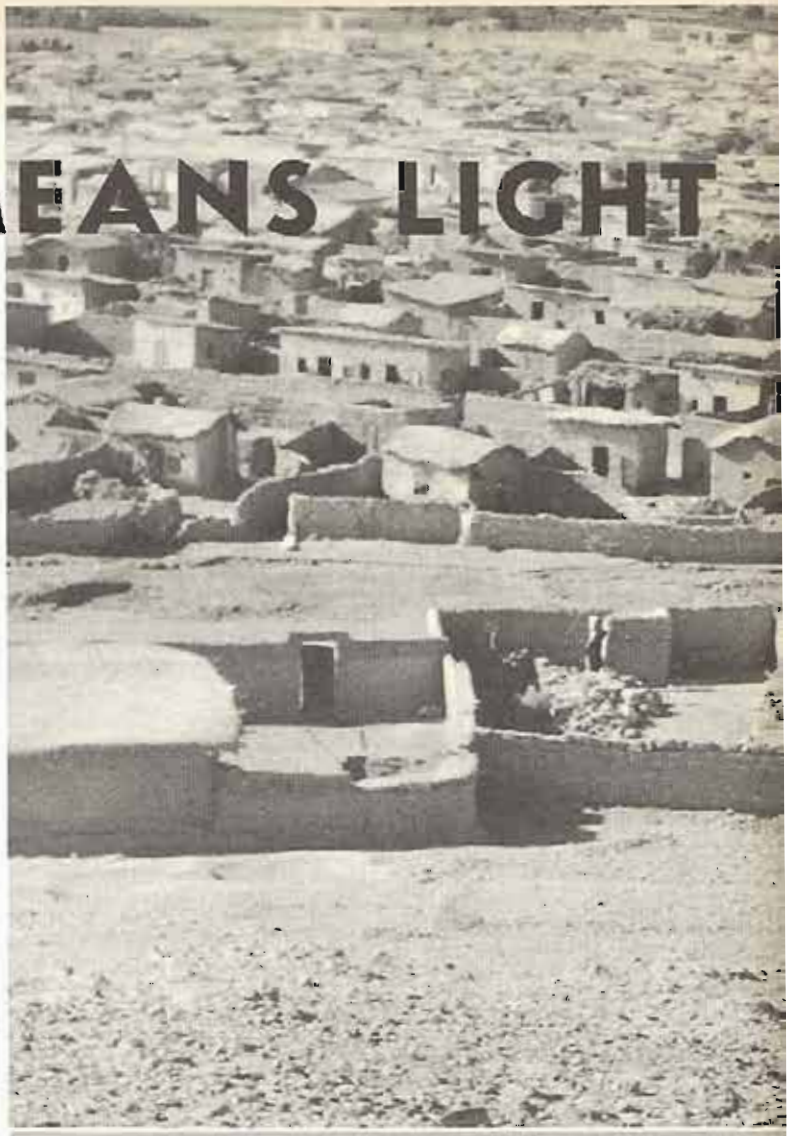
In Arab Lands

LEARNING MEANS LIGHT

by Georges Fradier

This is the second of three articles on the educational situation of Asia, the Middle East and Africa by our special correspondent, Georges Fradier. The first, on Asia, appeared in our November issue. Georges Fradier now describes the problem in countries of the Arab world from Iraq to Morocco.

THE COURIER, 1961



UNRWA

In the Arabic speaking countries there are now nearly 5,000,000 children in primary schools—double the number of a decade ago. But a wide gap will have to be closed before there are enough schools and teachers for all the 15 million children of school age, like the Arab boy (above) on a hillside overlooking his native village. Often the only kind of education available is in the traditional Koranic schools (below).

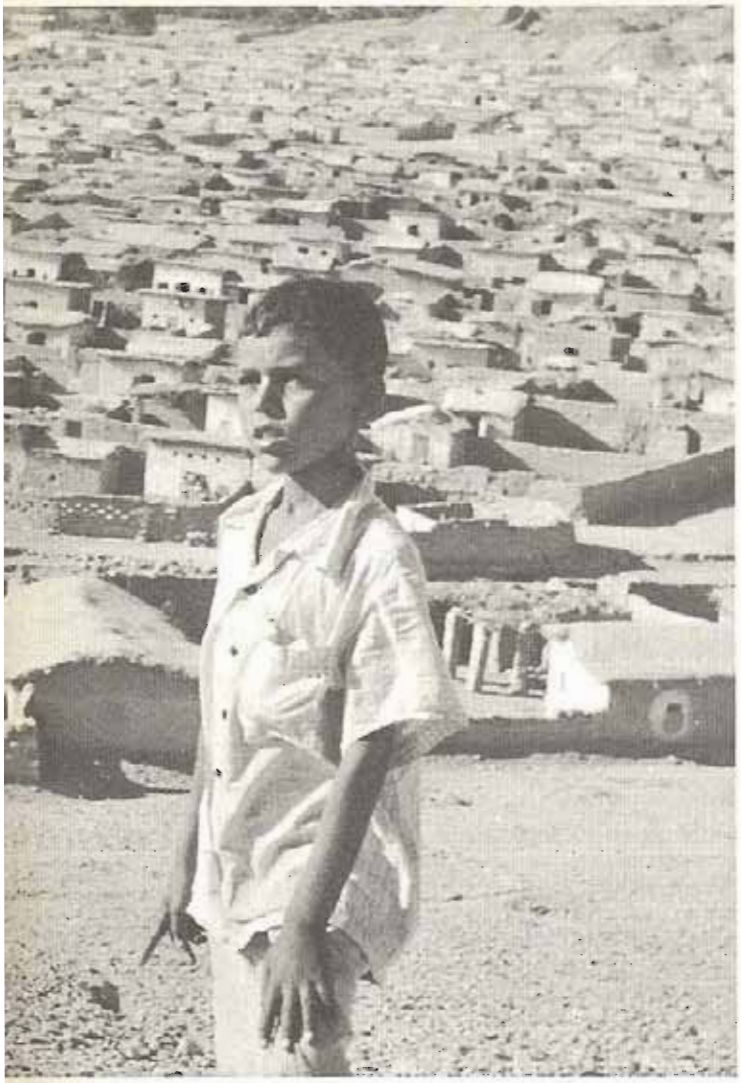
© Paul Almasy, Paris

In the third century of the Hegira, around the year 840, a genial moralist with a taste for writing on every imaginable subject included in his *Book of Exposition and Demonstration* the portraits of various teachers in Baghdad, Kufa and Basra. He carefully differentiated between the eminent lecturers in law and theology whose discourses enthralled distinguished gatherings and the mass of enthusiastic and half-starved schoolteachers who grappled with hordes of children.

In the days of Abu Utman al-Djahiz there was indeed no lack of schoolteachers in Islam. Long before the conquests and conversions there were undoubtedly many more teachers in the Middle East than there were in Europe, teaching in Greek at one place, in Syriac at another, in Hebrew, Persian or Arabic. By propagating "the world's most read book", the new faith had stimulated the spirit of study and research. Every mosque had its school where the Koranic adage was inculcated: "He unto whom wisdom is given, he truly hath received abundant good" or that injunction of the Prophet's to "Seek knowledge even if it be in China, since the seeking of knowledge is obligatory upon every Moslem, man or woman."

Until the fifteenth century, elementary education—the teaching of reading, writing and arithmetic which was virtually general in the towns—advanced side-by-side with the vast expansion of Arab science and culture. The latter, even when they had declined in the Iraqi and Syrian towns from which they emerged, continued to grow stronger and to proliferate in Central Asia, in Sicily and above all in Europe and North Africa.

But at the end of this period, the great historian Ibn



Khaldoun ended a chapter on the "philosophic sciences" with the statement, "We are told that in the country of the Franks and in the land of Rome and the neighbouring regions of the northern coasts (of the Mediterranean) the philosophic sciences are greatly in favour, their principles have been revived, there are many groups to teach them and there is an increasing number eager to study them..." Thus, the European Renaissance was proclaimed in Tunis at the very moment when Arab culture and education were about to enter a long period of stagnation and even decline. Economic depression, loss of independence, cities sunk in apathy...

During four centuries, the cultivated population was barely able to do more than maintain the tongue of the masters of the Golden Age. Their doctrines and their works together with their universities became lifeless. Elementary education itself became rarer and rarer and less and less valued. The small schools survived, generally kept going by religious foundations: under the direction of ignorant teachers, themselves a vestige of the Middle Ages persisting into the nineteenth century, the children—the male children—were given an education consisting of learning verses from the Koran by heart.

Nevertheless, the Arab revival had begun in the nineteenth century. Among the Christians of Lebanon and the Moslems of Egypt, thinkers, statesmen and poets shook the dust from the old books. Reformers introduced the disciplines and sometimes the methods of "modern" education into the ancient universities of Al Azhar, of Cairo and of Zaitouna in Tunisia. Thenceforward the movement developed with astonishing speed. Under the influence of the new universities in Cairo, Alexandria and Beirut, education at all levels has recovered the vigour and prestige which had been lost for so long. Taking the Arab countries as a whole, it might seem the solution of fundamental educational problems was already in sight.

Unfortunately, the Arab world is enormous and progress has been made at a very different rate in the various countries. Some Arab countries lag a good many years behind others. In more than one country, hampering tensions arise from the co-existence, and some times rivalry, of the traditional schools which are almost wholly religious in nature and the undenominational schools modelled on the Western pattern. By way of compensation, in other countries State education—which, incidentally, provides for regular religious instruction—has been able to develop unhindered. But in all Arab countries alike, from the derricks of Kuwait to the pasture lands of the Atlas region, from the banks of the Orontes to the banks of the Upper Nile, the longing for education merges with the will to play a part in the Arab renaissance.

THERE are grounds for believing that this longing will be fulfilled. Indeed, taking all Arab countries together, one finds that the annual rate of increase in the number of children at school is about 10 per cent, whereas the annual rate of increase in the number of children of school age is only about 3 or 4 per cent. Plainly, the race between population increase and the schools is going to be won by the schools if this trend persists.

In those Arab States which are the best-equipped and the best situated in the field of education there are still thousands of children for whom there is no accommodation in the schools or whose villages still have no school worthy of the name. In yet other countries which were only recently able to begin their educational programme, the majority of the children must still be left to one side or temporarily forgotten about.

Sometimes it is necessary to consider emergency measures, the mobilization of available resources in order to speed up education; sometimes the authorities are above all preoccupied with reforming the content and the tools of teaching where these are thought inadequate to the needs of the young and of the community as a whole. Almost invariably they are forced back to the same great problem: how to train the masters who are now needed and who will be needed even more tomorrow?

AN enquiry recently carried out by Unesco in 10 Arab countries (1) reveals that the most urgent problem today is the "shortage of qualified teachers."

In the Lebanon, for example, authorities describe the present situation as "particularly disturbing." In the whole country there is only one primary teacher-training school and one secondary teacher-training school which graduated 97 student-teachers in 1958. But the number of posts which must be filled yearly is approximately two hundred in respect of primary education and seventy in respect of secondary education. In these circumstances, it is hardly surprising that a number of classes are conducted by teachers whose qualifications are more than a little vague. "About half the teachers in the primary schools have had a training inferior to a complete secondary course."

The situation is perhaps most serious in Libya where, in order to press ahead as rapidly as possible, it was found necessary to employ a number of primary school teachers who themselves had received little more than primary education. In Morocco where at least 2,000 new

(1) *Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Tunisia, United Arab Republic.*

CONTINUED ON PAGE 20

TEN MILLION CHILDREN IN SEARCH OF TEACHERS

teachers a year will be needed, the number of student-teachers supplied by the teacher-training schools in 1959 was only 500. In the Sudan, the qualifications required of a teacher consist of the diploma granted after the first secondary stage plus two years' professional training; but the eight institutions which offer this training are far from able to meet current needs since in 1959 they were only able to supply the country's 2,000 schools with 632 men teachers and 177 women teachers.

In this regard, one of the great difficulties confronting Ministers of Education is to find teachers for provinces located far from the capital and, for that matter, for villages which are close to the capital but which are still only villages. The young teachers, accustomed to the comfort of their colleges and the luxury of the big cities, find living conditions in the villages intolerable. Attempts have occasionally been made to solve this problem by providing the teacher with living quarters in accordance with his needs and tastes; but the cost of building such quarters, even the least luxurious models, is far beyond the financial means of almost all the Arab countries.

Payment of indemnities provides no solution since the teacher, however modest his requirements, is often unable to find a reasonable house in the area to which he has been appointed. The solution generally envisaged in these countries today is one which has been repeatedly suggested in other regions: namely, that the ministers concerned should recruit more young student-teachers in these less attractive areas in the hope that, once their training has been completed, they will want to return there to teach.

It is, however, in the secondary and vocational schools and in the trade training centres that the shortage of teachers seems especially critical. In some countries the full gravity of the situation is not yet apparent because many of these institutions were founded and are still maintained by private groups, religious missions and even foreign countries which provide a large proportion of the staff and equipment. But with few exceptions, this aid does not go far to meet the development which the economic progress of these countries requires.

At the present time, 16 in a hundred pupils go to secondary schools and the proportion in secondary vocational schools is 2 per cent. Thus, without noticeably increasing these proportions, it is estimated that secondary institutions in Iraq in 1965 will have 235,000 pupils, necessitating the training of 850 teachers per year. As things stand, however, the total number of those graduating from Iraq's teacher-training colleges barely exceeds 300.

In Libya, a number of secondary schoolteachers come from neighbouring countries. In the Syrian province of the United Arab Republic there is small hope of meeting the needs of secondary institutions for several years to come, even though private education at this level copes with a large proportion of pupils. Egypt, in fact, would seem to be the only country at present able to meet the growing needs of secondary education.

Pause for reading as a Saudi Arabian boy kneels on the rocky ground to peruse his textbook of short stories.

© Paul Almasy, Paris

Even Egypt is short of qualified teachers for certain subjects, especially mathematics, science and modern languages. Other countries make the same complaint and generally with still more cause. It may be possible to find first rate students in literature, history or even law, philosophy or social sciences who, despite their hopes for a different career, nevertheless become satisfactory teachers of grammar, literature or the social sciences. Their friends who have specialized in science, in English or French, are not likely to accept to become teachers. Unless they have a positive vocation for teaching, they are more likely to take one of the infinitely more attractive jobs offered by industry or commerce or the civil service.

In countries, in the process of development which still lack top-level men for the most important sectors of the national economy, it is useless to count on university students turning to teaching as a last resort. The teacher-training colleges must provide a full training for teachers specializing in the different disciplines where neither incompetents nor enthusiastic amateurs can be accepted. Additionally, the State—and public opinion—must treat teaching with the seriousness it deserves. A bad bookkeeper is dismissed; but too often an incompetent teacher, whose shortcomings may have serious consequences, is allowed to retain his position. From another point of view it would be wholly unreasonable to argue that teaching is such a noble profession that anyone who abandons it for a better paid job is blameworthy.

"Material advantages" cannot anywhere be neglected for long. And in every one of the Arab States, the Minister of Education realizes regretfully that teachers

Arab refugee boy is among thousands learning trades in UNRWA-UNESCO school workshops.

UNRWA

are inadequately paid. The salary scales may be the same, by and large, as those for other civil servants with comparable qualifications and seniority; but authorities recognize that the teacher's modest pay is no longer proportionate to the amount of work and the professional qualities which are required of him. His salary is a hangover from the days when it was thought fitting that the schoolmaster should be as poor as he was respectable.

Some governments openly deplore the fact that the salaries paid to young teachers are "slightly lower" than those paid to other civil servants. Nobody in these States denies that the remuneration received by teachers is inadequate; on the contrary, there is a real desire to improve their living conditions; but so far the burdens involved in expanding education have made it impossible for most of the States to change things.

Over recent years, the educational authorities in almost all the Arab countries have outlined their aims in documents which have been as carefully thought over and drawn up as the constitution of a new republic. Despite significant variations in regard to one or another aspect of the various tasks of education, all agree as to the basic objective: to equip the child to play a full part in the political and economic life of his country.

Most of these lands regard themselves as new countries, in spite of the antiquity of their traditions. They know that they are in the midst of an evolutionary process. The citizens of tomorrow are expected to make their country stronger, more prosperous, better qualified to play a useful role in international life.

It may be asked whether the education provided in primary and secondary schools is linked with and, indeed, actually assists the achievement of this ambition.

No educator on earth can be completely sure that the programmes which he recommends or is called on to follow are in every way ideally adapted to pupils' needs, especially to their future needs as citizens and followers of a career. To take an example from among the countries with which we are dealing it is likely that there is some doubt in the United Arab Republic as to the desirability of sharply divided "streams" which result in half of all secondary pupils completing two out of three years without learning anything at all of mathematics, physics, chemistry or natural sciences. On the other hand, their fellow-students in the scientific stream have nothing to do with history or geography. The programmes in Libya, which have been drawn up on another basis, devote 20 hours a week during the last year (classical option) of a five-year secondary course to the teaching of languages, and not one hour to mathematics and science.

A graver defect which Arab educators have pointed out in various educational institutions is the abstract, bookish, not to say boring, nature of the teaching. The teaching methods used in these schools, which vary in number and size from country to country, rely overmuch on learning by heart in order to pass examinations. Such methods, inherited perhaps from the old Mosque teachers who concentrated on memorization, no longer suffice: they run the risk of developing memory at the cost of logical thinking, critical sense, the spirit of research and individual initiative. There are signs that the new generation of teachers is being trained in the modern teacher-training colleges and universities to use very different methods.

Unfortunately, this defect is reflected in the textbooks which are still used by young schoolmasters both for their own studies and in teaching their pupils. The books provided—or forced on—the pupils are all too often sketchy and dogmatic, dry or ponderous and badly illustrated: it is rare indeed that they introduce readers to the "joy of reading" and the excitement of discovering things for themselves. They supply a set of bleak absolutes which must be humbly imbibed in order to give satisfaction and achieve success.

Additionally, in almost all the Arab States, secondary education—and even vocational and technical education—has long been synonomous with "Western" education, wholly taught in English or French. This is still the case in a number of countries where the increased use of Arabic in education is the order of the day. This is not aimed at the abandonment of the European languages currently used nor even at the systematic substitution of Arabic as the teaching language at every level and for every subject; but the curricula cannot much longer remain based solely on those which emerged from another culture, another history, a whole series of different factors, in another country.

In certain cases, the subject-matter itself should be radically modified—geography and history, for example. In other cases, the relative importance given to different subjects is in need of revision: the ancient and modern literature of a given region or nation cannot be left in the background. Finally, there is no doubt that, irrespective of the subjects studied and the final aim of schooling, the study of Arabic should be made general and deeper.

Study in concentration as two Jordanian schoolgirls share a bench in the sun at the Hawara Education Centre.

Hawara Fundamental Education Centre

Dressed up and painted for dancing and miming, two smiling Moroccan girls entertain classmates.

© Gerda Bohm, Rabat

CONT'D ON NEXT PAGE

AN ANCIENT LANGUAGE GETS A MODERN DRESS

Some countries go further and envisage educational reforms which are not only concerned with the national language in relation to foreign languages. Education is sometimes hindered, to a greater or lesser extent depending on the region, by the differences between classical or "literary" Arabic and the popular language spoken by pupils and masters.

Between a language spoken by very different peoples scattered over great areas and the classical form of that language fixed 1,300 years ago in sacred writings, there is an inevitable gulf but it does not seem to hamper literary studies in any way. Moreover, the durability of the classical language has undoubtedly helped prevent the growth of great differences between the various dialects and thus helped ensure the cohesion of the Arab world.

One proof is the use made after some adaptation, of this form of the language by press and radio. None of this applies, however, when the language is used to teach and study scientific subjects, using that term in its widest sense, which have only emerged during the last two centuries and which may even date from as recently as yesterday. Possibly because there are still not enough original works on physics, biology, chemistry, sociology or political economy in Arabic, the Arab student is often puzzled by the vocabulary and style used in these sciences.

A number of groups or institutions have therefore taken on the daunting task of adapting to the needs of modern education the language which the old masters restricted to poetry, prayer and law yet which nevertheless once excited the greatest admiration when used in the fields of logic, history, astronomy and algebra. The Moroccan Minister of Education recently announced the setting-up of an institute for the development of Arabic which, in co-operation with experts from various countries, would work for the modernization and unification of the different forms of spoken Arabic so as to provide a single working language for both students and researchers, for laboratories and schools, for newspapers and scientific journals.

The educational void which must be filled most urgently in most Arab countries is to be found in technical and, generally speaking, vocational training. The proportion of secondary pupils to primary pupils throughout the whole region is 16 per cent. This is, relatively, a high proportion, even if the secondary education sometimes seems unduly rapid. But the proportion of pupils enrolled in institutions for training technicians in industry, agriculture and commerce amounts to only 2 per cent of all school enrolments.

All States which have laid down development plans to ensure that their educational system is geared to their economy envisage a very substantial increase in technical education at both the post-primary and secondary levels. Morocco, for instance, expects that 44,000 primary school pupils will go on to this type of education in October 1964: eight times as many as in 1959.

Several years ago the Arab States underlined the necessity of basing the future of their educational systems on rational planning to meet their educational, social and economic requirements. Some have already taken the necessary steps; others still lack qualified staff.

The representatives of nine countries who studied these problems at the UNESCO Beirut Conference in February 1960, devoted themselves in particular to educational planning and the relationship between such planning and over-all economic and social planning. This conference recommended the setting-up, with UNESCO assistance, of a Centre for the Advanced Training of Senior Personnel in the preparation, execution and continual adaptation of educational plans, within the framework of overall planning.

This is one of many projects which will unquestionably help the Arab States, and especially the poorer ones, to overcome the obstacles still hampering the carrying out of basic reforms. Certain types of limited, temporary assistance are decisive if provided at the right time and in carefully selected sectors. This would apply to the training centre ; it also applies to the technical assistance missions which the United Nations, the Specialized Agencies and particularly UNESCO continue to send to most of these countries; another example is the Fundamental Education Centre at Sirs-el-Layyan in the Egyptian delta which has been in operation for seven years under the joint patronage of the United Arab Republic and UNESCO.

Mention should also be made of the work carried out by UNRWA in the refugee camps of Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Gaza: the 382 UNRWA-UNESCO schools which have gradually been developed in recent years have more than 100,000 pupils. Finally, the aid provided by the U.N. Special Fund to secondary technical education and higher technical education will have far-reaching effects.

Whether for planning and statistics, school building or teacher training, trade training centres or engineering institutions, most of these States need assistance if they are to overcome the barriers. It would be wrong to exaggerate the seriousness of all these difficulties (temporary shortage of staff and financial problems) but they do prevent advances at the very moment when the impulse towards progress is at its height.

Freed of these initial concerns, the Arab States themselves will do the rest—and the rest, as they well know, is gigantic. They will have to rid themselves of the thousand and one difficulties which long years of isolation, poverty and sometimes dependence have placed on the road leading to the economic, cultural and intellectual revival which they are determined to achieve.

Unesco-Paul Almasy

ON A SHADY TERRACE, secondary school girls at Omdurman, Sudan, receive an out-of-doors lesson in home economics. A Unesco specialist is an adviser at this school.

Down through the years

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Cover of the UNESCO Courier, July-August, 1986.

"Of all the journals published by the United Nations and its specialised institutions, the UNESCO Courier has always occupied first place for the number of its readers and paying subscribers, the range of its audience, both young and old, due to the high quality of its articles and illustrations, its objectivity and its international spirit", wrote the America journalist, Sandy Koffler in 1988. He was the Courier's founder and first Editor-in-Chief, from 1948 to 1950 and 1951 to 1977.

The magazine is sixty years old today. It has changed a great deal over the years and, since March 2006, has only been available online. Some of those who have left their mark on the magazine look back.

A time when everything had to be invented

"Once the war was over, the world opened to new ideas. A wave of sagacity shunned national borders, extolling the virtues of international cooperation and human values inspired by the Charter of the United Nations and affiliated organisations," said René Caloz, Deputy Editor of the Courier from 1961 to 1977, and Editor-in-Chief from 1977 to 1978. Before joining UNESCO, he had been Paris correspondent for the Swiss press since 1946.

"People of my generation, returning from years of disaster, gained new hope and reconnected with the future. As a journalist and war correspondent in Italy, having seen the final stages of the bloody conflicts in Europe, I did not hesitate to file stories that were filled with what I saw emerging in Paris, London and beyond the Atlantic, on the avenue Kléber (note, UNESCO's first Paris address), seeking out news and interviews with enthusiastic figures, like Jaime Torres Bodet, Jean Piaget, Frank Malina and of course, my American colleague, Sandy Koffler.

With only basic resources, Sandy Koffler gave his utmost to shape the new periodical, and give it impetus and quality. 'UNESCO Courier' was the name he gave to this missive that adhered to the essential principles of the Declaration of Human Rights. Can there be a more inspiring ensign for a journalist?

It is about 1948. Like many of my colleagues, I admire the Courier, its adolescence, its restrained success, its promising future. And so a firm desire took root inside of me, to serve as a journalist like Koffler, to breathe a new air, far from the accumulation of professional routines that haunted me. […]" (The entire French text can be found at Link, July 2007).

Mid-life crisis

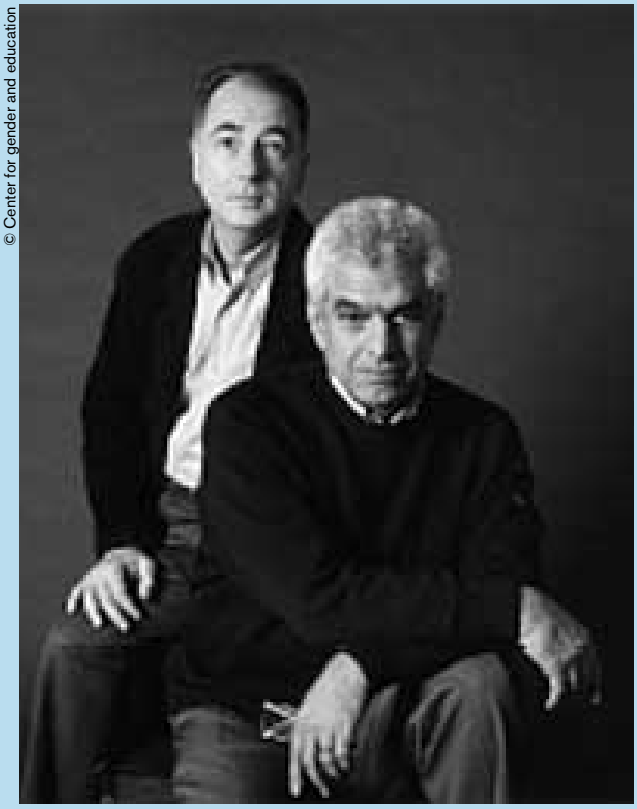
It is 1988. The Courier's existence is threatened. Sandy Koffler reacts vigorously. Here are extracts from his defence: "Before imagining radical changes to the content and presentation of the UNESCO Courier, it should be remembered that the periodical has been published monthly for 40 years (January1948) and, in its current format and appearance, for 36 years (1952). […] The very large number of editions published outside of headquarters (32) at the initiative of Member states, national commissions and private or commercial enterprises in these countries, is evidence of the cultural and educational impact that the UNESCO Courier has had and continues to have throughout the

world. […] It is with sadness that I learned that the French edition of the UNESCO Courier (which has the highest circulation of all the magazine's editions) has lost over half of its subscribers since 1981(55%) and that the editions published at headquarters in Spanish and English have also seen their figures drop, albeit to a lesser extent. Quite frankly, I would have been surprised if that were not the case. The UNESCO Courier is a non-specialised magazine aimed at a wide readership who see it as a reflection of UNESCO. If the organisation goes through a crisis, if its reputation is tarnished by certain events (justified or not)) the repercussions will be felt in the attitude of readers to the magazine and, as a result, in the rate of subscriptions. […]"

The same year, the Martinique-born writer, Édouard Glissant published a voluminous Cumulative Index to the magazine, which he had directed since 1982 and defined in these terms:

"With its ear tuned to the world, the UNESCO Courier forges a lively and remarkably well-informed link between the sensitivities of different peoples, the concerns of modern society and a passion for knowledge.

The magazine is careful to defend the ideal of justice, which is the honour of humanity, in all domains of culture, education and science. It is also one of the rare periodicals to reveal and promote, from one horizon to the other, both the wealth of individual civilizations and the generalised aspiration to share knowledge."



© Center for gender and education

Under the pseudonym of Mahmoud Hussein, Bahgat Elnadi and Adel Rifaat published a number of four-handed works, notably Versant sud de la liberté (La Découverte, 1989) and Al-Sîra (Grasset, vol. I, 2005 and vol. II, 2007).

When a wave of freedom washed over the world

Two Egyptians, Bahgat Elnadi and Adel Rifaat, (alias Mahmoud Hussein), took over the direction of the Courier in October 1988. They left a decade later. This was a turbulent period, which shook the old two-power world, and was reflected in the contents of the magazine.

"When we joined the Courier, the Cold War was giving way to 'glasnost', the fall of the Berlin wall, the break-up of the Soviet Union. A wave of freedom was washing over the world, making it possible to speak much more freely in the pages of the Courier. […]

The rationale for the Courier was changing. Until then, the magazine had been a rare 'window open on the world', a terribly partitioned world, where Europe knew little about the people and cultures of Asia, Africa or Latin America, where the capitalist and socialist worlds turned their backs on one another. The Courier had opened the first cracks in the partitions. It was greeted with particular amazement in Eastern Europe, where it had often been the only non-ideological paper to circulate freely. The only breath of fresh air.

With the end of the Cold War, the opening of frontiers between East and West, and between North and South, the fashion for TV documentaries and specialised magazines such as National Geographic and Géo, rendered our 'monthly window open on the world' obsolete; it was time to do something different.

We redesigned the magazine, attempting to present a wide sample of cultural sensitivities and personal points of view every month, on a theme having universal interest. Unrivalled in this domain, UNESCO could do something original and powerful.

Our predecessors had obviously also followed the idea of themes with universal interest – resulting in some superb issues – but it had been intermittent. We felt that something more systematic was needed and, above all, that there should be no more issues devoted to a particular civilisation, country or national glory [...]"

The universal language of photography

Up until December 2001, the UNESCO Courier was a monthly, illustrated magazine, printed on paper and published in some thirty languages. An American, Ariane Bailey, was the magazine's picture editor from 1977. She recalls a time when photography occupied 60% of the magazine's pages, making a large contribution to its identity.

A black hand grips a fence. The hand and the fence are sharp, but the rest – the hand, the face, the person's identity – are blurred. This was the cover of the November 1977 issue of the UNESCO Courier on apartheid. This photo by René Burri, which we found at the Magnum picture agency, after a day of frantic searching, stood out from the rest. There was absolutely no doubt, this was the only image, out of hundreds of slides in a dozen agencies that could symbolise the chaos, the struggle, and self-questioning of an entire people.

The cover always had to capture the reader's attention and plunge him or her into the heart of the matter: dilated pupils, flaming, in a round face against a red background, the Manga-like work of a 5-year-old Chinese artist on the cover of "Children in Danger" (October 1991) is a much more powerful portrayal than any adult image could have been, of the

terror and powerlessness felt by a child. This issue, which brought together psychologists, educationalists, sociologists and other eminent "ists" would have no meaning without the involvement of its very subject-matter.

"Window open on the World", this was the sub-title of the Courier, which wanted to get the reader look at the unknown, to perceive the other. In this context, the iconography, this form of writing with images, had a coherence and life of its own. It could give a rhythm to the pages, create an atmosphere, as it did in an issue devoted to prisons, in June 1998, punctuated by photographs taken by inmates at Wandsworth Prison, in London. This was the prison world, mostly in black and white: a bare light bulb burning in an empty cell, a 'self portrait' showing the soles of crossed feet at the end of the bed … On the cover was a plane, flying high above barbed wire. Prisoners, deprived of their rights and denied a voice, used photos to express what they felt. Meanwhile, even if only for a moment, the reader could look through the eyes of the prisoner and live in his body. The Courier invested in this universal language of photography to break down barriers and reach consciences

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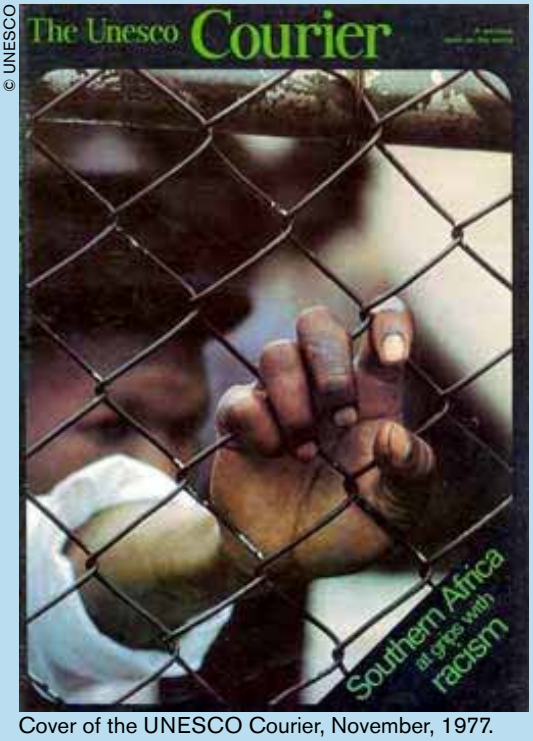

Cover of the UNESCO Courier, November, 1977.

The Courier wishes to thank the Association of former UNESCO staff members for the July 2007 special issue of its magazine *Link* devoted to it.

NEXT ISSUE

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Wreck of the Umbria (Sudan).

UNDERWATER CULTURAL HERITAGE

**How can it be protected? How can we use the knowledge we obtain from these remains?
How can it be shared with a wide audience?
The next issue of the Courier will provide some answers to these questions,
marking the entry into force on 2 January of UNESCO's Convention
on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage.**

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